LARGE LETTERS.

Three in number, containing much neceſſarie matter, for the inſtruction and comfort of ſuch, as are diſtreſſed in conſcience by feeling of ſinne, and feare of Gods wrath.

WRITTEN HEERETOfore by T. W. for ſome deare friends of his, and now publiſhed and printed for the raiſing vp of ſuch as labor vnder the heauie burthen of an afflicted Spirite.

PSAL. 42. 11.

Why art thou caſt downe my ſoule? and why art thou diſquieted within me? wait on God: for I will yet giue him thanks, hee is my preſent helpe and my God.

AT LONDON
Printed by Roger Warde, for Thomas Man,
1589.

TO HIS FAITHFVLL friends, and verie deare brethren in *Christ, Maſt. Roger Ofield, Robert Waſhborne, George Smith, Thomas Shipton, Iohn Field, Robert Iones, Iohn Harper, Iohn Hounſell, and all the reſt of his Chriſtian acquaintaunce in London, aswell as though they were particularlie named, together with all thoſe that elſwhere in the land, vnfaignedly feare the Lord, and looke for the glorious appearing, of his ſonne and our ſauiour.* T. W. *wiſheth all ſpirituall goodnes & heauenly comfort in this life, and in the end the eternall glorification of their bodies and ſoules, in euerlaſting bliſſe through Chriſt.*

MY loue in the Lorde, and the affectiõs of my hart in him, haue bin in ſome meaſure of ſoundnes, (I humbly thanke God for it in Chriſt)

ly carried generallie towvardes all the Israell of GOD whereſoeuer, and more particularlye toyvardes you my good Breethren: vvhereof ouer and beſides, the aſſured teſtimony of mine owne ſoule, I haue for faithful witneſſes, the Lord himſelfe in heauen, and many of his ſaints vpon earth, and amongſt others you your ſelues. Cauſes leading me hereto are manye: but as in reſpect of God, none more powerfull, than his grace and holy ſpirite, ſhed abroad into my heart: and as in regard of you, none more effectuall than ſundry ſincere fruites of your faith, and the comfortable feeling of the communion of ſaints, in which holy fellowſhip ſtandeth, not onely the ſpiritual felicity and good of the whole bodie, but the very ioy and contentment alſo, of euerie ſounde member therein. For outward kindneſſes that I haue receiued from you, I muſt & will euerie where, acknowledge my ſelfe much beholding vn-

to you. And yet this I may vvith all boldnes profeſſe, that as that is not the onely or principall cauſe, moueing me to affect you: ſo though I haue beene beholding to you all, yet not to all alike, but to ſome more than to other ſome. Which alſo I rehearſe not now, either to breed anie diſdaine or emulation in you, one of you towards another, for that vvere to breake the bond of charity and vnitie of the ſpirit: or to leſſen any fauour though neuer ſo ſmall, that I haue receiued from you, for that wer to depriue you of your praiſe, and to declare my ſelfe ingratfull: nor craftilie clavving after the maner of the vvorld, to craue newe benefites, for that vvere nothing els but deceit and flatterie to procure mine own good, from all vvhich corruptions, I haue hitherto as in reſpect of my ſelfe and you, through Gods goodneſſe beene graciouſlie freed. But to let you vnderſtand, that your benefits haue not bene beſtowed vpon an vnskilfull or

an thankefull person, but vpon such a one, as by the light that he hath receiued from God, hath, vveighing them in an equal ballance, esteemed of them according to the goodnes of the gift, and the christian affection of the Partie giuing. The thinges indeede, which haue most specially linked mee fast in the Lorde vnto you, are your precious faith towards God, vnfaigned loue to the saints, christian consciences amongest your selues, and holie praiers in presence and absence, one of you for an other and all of you I am assured, for the holy causes and faithfull members of the whole Church, and amongest the rest, euen for me pore and wretched man that I am. In which duties of yours, as my heart hath greatly reioiced in the lord, for the graces that in great mercy, he hath bin pleased to vouchsafe vnto you, & I my selfe haue as in some sort, though not to the ful, in regard of your spirituall fauours performed to me, by reson of weakneſſe

neſſe and wants in my ſelfe, aunſwe-
red them again with the like,(I write
not as a vaineglorious boaſter): ſo I
doubt not,but that therby God him
ſelfe hath receiued glorie at your
hands, his childrē goten much good,
and you your ſelues reaped a gracy-
ous meaſure and increaſe, of religy-
ous knowledge, and dutifull obedi-
ence. As for the worldly fauours that
you haue ſhewed me,and bodily be-
nefites that vvay, I confeſſe my ſelfe
to be far behind hand with you,and
much indebted in deed, though not
in affection ſurely, and readineſſe of
good vvill, for ſo my heart is verie
large (in humilitie I ſpeake it) ney-
ther will I wiſh better witneſſes of it
than your ſelues,yet in regard of ac-
tion, vvherein ſtill my griefe grow-
eth great, and increaſeth daily vpon
me, as vvell by the feare that I haue
of my future wants,as by the feeling
of my former and preſent diſabili-
ties. Hovvbeit, ſith thys is the Lords
doing,and that he is pleaſed thereby

to

to sift me, and to sound you (mee for my patience and comfortable induring of these necessities, and you for your faithfull obedience and vnfaigned loue) I can not but vvith some measure of spirituall ioy, vndergoe mine owne lacks, and againe recomfort my spirites, because hauing to deale vvith God and his seruaunts, (vvho haue learned from his holie example greater than all exception, to accept of men according to that they haue, and not according to that they haue not) I rest resolued, my good vvill shall bee accounted as a deed, specially sith I am ready euery vvhere, vvithout flatterie in my self, or fawning vpon you, to acknovvledge to the glorie of God, and the good of his people, the great good turnes that by you, I haue receiued euen from the Lords ovvne handes. And yet gladly vvould I, if I could tell hovve, some vvay recompence, though not all, yet som part & peece thereof. And in that respect indeede

haue

haue I long looked & vvished for, as some good occasion from you, wherin it might haue pleased you all, or any of you, to haue imployed and vsed me to my pore vttermost: So, some sufficiencie in my selfe, at the leastwise in some mean measure to haue requited that ouerflowing heape, of your kindnes and holy loue. But hitherto (I deliuer it with my griefe of heart, as a man sensiblie seeing and feeling gods hand vpon my selfe, both that and other waies also) my expectation and hope hath bene frustrat, and my power very short and skant. A small thing the Lorde vvas pleased some years ago, to inable me in two or three Letters, to performe for the comfort of some of my christian acquaintance, (whose conflicts in conscience vvere great and many) which lying by mee, vvith some other simple thinges that I haue done, and I beeing earnestly requested to make that comon to many, which was writ ten for some particulars, & lay at it

vvere

vvere buried in forgetfulnes, by mé, the ſame alſo being at the laſt ouerviewed by ſome good breethren whome I much loue and reuerence in the lord, I was at the length ouercome & could not chooſe but yeild, Wherein though ſome perhaps may ſuppoſe that I labour, in publiſhing an vnneceſſarie & impertinent matter, becauſe theſe ignorant dayes require Doctrine for building of men vp in knovvledge and iudgement, and theſe careleſſe and contemptuous times, abounding vvith all manner of looſnes and levvdnes, craue rebuke rather, and exhortation for care and conſcience in the dueties vve knovve, as a more fit and meete argument for this diſſolute age: yet being aſſured of this, both by mine owne knovvledge, and other mens faithfull reportes, that ſundrie there are abroad in this land, and amongſt the reſt, euen ſome of you and yours, that as in regarde of your ſpirituall combats and bickerings, and the bitter

ter assaultes and temptations you haue found therein, had need of holy and heauenly comfort, I could not but as in a generall care, for all the afflicted ones, to vvhome I wishe all the comforts of God, as to my ovvn soule: so in particular good vvil tovvardes you your selues (vvhose invvard comfort, and outvvard ioy, I vvould bee glad and ready to procure at all times, and by all meanes, if I could tel hovv, but acquaint you and them (specially sithit is one principall portion of the svveet Manna, that the lord hath prouided for you) vvith such pleasaunt and delightfull consolations, & that out of the word as God by his spirit hath vvrought in mee, for the peace of mine ovvne heart, and by me, though vnvvorthie euery way, communicated vnto som others. What root they may take or effects they may bring forth I knovv not. Sure I am of this, my earnest praiers vnto God, as in regard of his religion and vvorship, and heartie

purpose

purpose in my selfe, as in respect of Christian good vvill, is, that all that mourne in our Sion, might reape some good by the same: vvhich if it cannot bee effected, either by meanes of my sinne that medle therin, or by reason that the svveet things published, cannot so seasonable or for lacke of oportunitie come to their knovvledge, or because that through diffidence they fore-close the vvaie and passage of consolation vnto themselues, (in all and euerye of vvhich desertes, I shall surelye mourne muche) yet my hope and heartes desire is, that all of you (my good friendes) might receiue some vvorthie fruite thereby, as vvell those amongest you that haue not as yet tasted of thys bitter cuppe, (a matter that you must looke for, and make an account of, if euer you vvill feele hovve sweete the Lord is indeed) vvhile you perceiue GOD fitting you, and furnishing you vvith the best armour

of

proofe that can bee, before the day of battaile drawe nigh: as those that haue beene or are tried (that beeing the verie state and condition of all Gods children) God according to your present distresses, prouiding for you, and reuealing vnto you, the present comfortes of his most faithfull vvorde, and infallible trueth, that so both the one sort and the other, hauing the povver of your ovvne sinnes, in the sufferinges of his sonne, if not vtterlie remoued and cleane taken avvay, yet verie much lessened, and as it vvere beaten dovvne, you might not onelye the more earnestlie, oppose your selues against satan in his sleights and haue an assured hope of a glorious and ioyfull victorie, against him and his assaults, but also may be inabled to stand, yea to ouercome in the day of euill, and to be more than cõquerors thorow him, that hath loued you & washed you in his bloud, vvho I doubt not shall shortly and mightily

mightilie alſo tread him and all his forces whatſoeuer, down vnder your feet. Now the very god of peace ſanctify you and al yours thoroweout: & I pray God, that your whole ſpirite and ſoule, and bodie, may bee kept blameles vntill the comming of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt: vvhereof I doubt not, becauſe he is faithful which hath called you, who alſo wil doe it. Good brethren pray for vs, that we may be readie in all things with vnfaignednes to do the Lords vvill. At London the tenth of of this December. 1589.

Yours readie and aſſured euer in Ieſus Chriſt. T. W. *the Lord his vnworthy ſeruant.*

GRACE AND PEACE
from God, &c.

BEcause I haue not nowe a long time, either by writing or by worde of mouth heard from you, (good Sir) I grow into some vncertain imaginations concerning your estate, (and by meanes thereof I freely confesse it) not only into neglect of some duety towardes your selfe, (I meane comming to visite you, and writing vnto you such simple comfortes, as God hath bin pleased to applicate vnto me, which I call simple, not as of themselues, for so they are high and excellent, but as I haue them in my earthen vessell) but also into cold per- a 2.Cor.4 7.
formance at the least, of som seruice vnto God, (I meane my supplications and

The duti: of a Christian and faithfull friend, towardes hys friend.

praiers vnto his maiestie, as on your behalfe. To pray for you, when God hath bene pleased to giue you, and in you me (for I take the fauours bestowed vpon you, to be kindnesse heaped vp vpon my selfe) thorow his mercifull deliuerance of you, a iust and holy occasion to prayse his name, should be the sinne of mine owne soule, because it were the offring vp of a wrong sacrifice, and presenting vnto God a *b* blind beast (as it were) As on the other side, to striue to yeeld you comfort, when you haue receiued a riche aboundance of the same from God himselfe, thorowe his holie worde, and blessed spirite, were, as it might be thought to doe a needlesse and vnnecessarie worke, for where there is fulnesse and plentie, scarsitie and barrennesse will little appeare, and doe small good. From the former, though I would gladly, as in regard of the lack of sound knowledge touching your present condition, and in respect of the dulnesse and heauinesse of my soule, as to other good workes, so to that particularlie

b Malac.1.8.

calarlie, cease till eyther from your selfe or others that are as your selfe, I should be faithfully certified of the state wherein you are, that so I might, as a feeling member with you, eyther vnfeignedly creioyce, in the asswaging of your trobles and trials, or else heartily weepe, and pitie you, and pray with you, and for you, in the continuance and increase of these distresses: yet wil not the doubts that I haue in me touching the continuance of these calamities, and the dutie that I owe vnto you, as in that behalfe let me vtterly leaue off, but needes I must nowe and then, (according to my poore measure) present you before God, and that by name in my requestes and prayers (though poore and faynt) In the other surely, I cannot (God ayding me) but inlarge my selfe to my vttermost, yea beyond it (if I could tell how) because I know it to be the Lordes assured trueth that I shall deliuer, and though not fit perhappes now for your selfe (by reason of your present comfort and ioy) yet heereafter i may bee, of

c Rom. 12. 15.

more then necessary vse for your selfe and others also, when these darke and glomie daies of assaultes shall againe take holde of you.

In both which respectes, as I rest perswaded that my poore paynes shall not vtterly perish, so cannot I but thoroughly assure mine own heart, that both the one and the other, shall be well accepted of you, who are wont much to make of euerie thing that commeth from me. In consideration whereof, I will the more willingly assaie (God assisting me) the performance of the matter I purpose, that is the yeelding of you some such comfortes, as d the God of all consolation hath giuen vnto me, not onely for the staie of mine owne conscience, but to the ende also that I might acquaint others that are in tribulation with the same.

d 2. Cor. 1.3.4.

The dealings of God with his dearest saintes and seruantes (in this behalfe especially) are as we knowe, by the light of the worde, and by experience in our selues, and examples of others, that

that haue gone before vs, or liue with vs, diuers and sundry, he throwing vs before, and lifting vs vp, and *e* turning vs to destruction, and yet saying, returne you sonnes of Adam: whose wayes as euerie manner of way, so in this respect especiallie, are much more vnsearchable, and past finding out, than *f* is the way of an Eagle in the ayre, the waie of a serpent vpō a stone, or the way of a ship, going with a right fore winde and full sayle, in the midst of the mayne sea, till God be pleased in the multitude of his mercies, in some measure to discouer the same vnto his seruantes.

e psal 90.3.

f pro. 30, 19

What God will doe with you (good sir) after so manifold and long trials, is vnknowne to me, because neither I, nor any other haue *g* bene of his counsell, in such secret and particular purposes, especiallie concerning others, whatsoeuer we may feel touching our selues. Howbeit, I cannot otherwise thinke or be perswaded, but that you haue bene, are, and so shal be for euer, *h* a vessell of his

g Rom. 11, 34

h & 9. 23. Tokens to assure men to be the vessels of mercie.

mercy, wherein I am dayly more and more confirmed, not onely by the christian carrying of your selfe, in the dayes of your former and present troubles, you patiently bearing them, and earnestly calling vppon God, for heauenly strength to vndergoe, and ouercome; but euen by the verie afflictions themselues, that you felt or feele, God by them setting (as it were) his own marke vpon you, the better to knowe you for one of his owne sheepe and sonnes, and

i Rom. & 8.29 so conforming you vnto the image of his best beloued in his sufferings, that in the same you might haue a certaine pledge of glorification with him.

Manifold and long afflictions a verie grieuous temptation.

Wherein though I acknowledge that it cannot be but verie grieuous, to be long held and much exercised, and the rather because it is not one, but manifold assaultes and temptations, with which you are troubled on euerie side, yet doubt I not, but that the issue and end that God shall worke of all these, shalbe exceeding good, not onely in regard of

An answere to it of the end.

k 2.Cor.4.17. k a far most excellent weight

of

of eternal glory, ℔ I know they pledge vp in you & other of Gods children, but of the effects also that for the time present they bring forth in you, as adding an edge vnto your prayers, which for the time, seemed to be colde or dead rather: lessening, yea beating backe the force of many other temptations, which no doubt might strongly assault, and mightily encounter with you: confirming you in vnfeigned affection, to the obedience of Gods good will (a worthy worke doubtlesse, and a matter of no small difficultie) stilling you, and that for your selfe and others also, with the comfortes and consolations which are from aboue, whiche hardly but by such meanes wee taste of, or attayne vnto, with sundrie such like.

Of the effects.

Afflictions to the faithfull, not so much a cause of discouragement, as to looke to themselues, and to cal vpon God for ayd and strength. 1 Heb. 12, 12.

In my poore iudgement therefore, you may, yea you ought to be so farre off from beeing discomfited and cast downe in this estate, wherein you are, that you haue rather iust occasion offered you to / lift vp your handes which hang downe, and to strengthen your

weake knees, yea to raise vp your dismaied spirites, assuring your selfe that howsoeuer the Lord lead you along, in manifolde and manifest afflictions, and carry you (as it were) from one lyon to another, yea howsoeuer hee seeme to bring you to the pits brincke, and make all the surges, and m waues of his displeasure, to rise vp against you and mount euer your head, that yet I will not n destitute you, nor o kayle you for euer, as well because hee trieth you no otherwise, nor exerciseth you no further, than he hath done those that haue beene deare and precious in his owne eyes, as also because he is both faithfull and powerfull to performe, both in heauen and in earthe, whatsoeuer hee hath promised to the sonnes of men, much more to his owne seruantes.

m Psal. 42. 7.

n 2. Cor. 4 8.
o Heb. 13. 5.

Two reasons.

Two apt similitudes declaring Gods loue towardes his children

¶ Whereun also no doubt he dealeth no otherwise with you, than earthly parentes doe many times with their owne deare children, who to make them the more plainly see, and the more strongly to be perswaded of their fatherly loue towards

towardes them, and manlike strength for their deliuerance, bring their sayd children to the fire side, that so they may feele more than a wounded heate thereof, and learne to feare it withall.

The like they practise towards them also in another element, namely in water, not onely carrying them all along the edge, brimme, or bancke, of some pond or riuer, but nowe and then making semblance, as if they would throw or thrust them into the same. And yet wee knowe they loue them no whit the lesse for all this: nay we are assured of this, the more nigh they are to danger, whether it arise from the negligence and ignorance of the children themselues, or seeme to be layd vppon them from the very louing and naturall parentes, the more sure and fast hold they take of them. And shal not we be much more perswaded, I wil not say of the like loue, but of farre *p* more exceeding loue in God, towards his sonnes and daughters: with whose fauour towardes his people, and power

p Esay. 49. 15.

for

for his childrens good, no affections of mine might (I dare auouch this) not of any, but of all, not men alone, but fathers and mothers in the worlde, (though linckes neuer so straitly vnto vs) is no maner of way matchable, nor so much as meete to be thought or spoken of with it, at the selfe same time.

Obiection, answered by example.

Your troubles in the soule, and your dangers that way, cannot seeme in any equall or vpright iudgment, to be more precious, or further past recouery, than q Ionas his were, when he was in the Whales belly: and yet the Lord commaunded that great fish, to deliuer him vp againe, whose absolute authoritie he could not withstand, but as a man that hath his stomacke surcharged, vomited him out. And is Gods r hand streitened now, or his power shortned? or his mercy abated, that he can not or will not performe as much for you? Or rather doth not God worke then most mightily and mercifully both when in mens eyes the way is stopped vp, not onely against a deed,

q Ionas. 2. 2. &c.

r Esay 59.1.
s Psal 77.8.9.

as

but against hope to beare it: To what ende serue these comfortable promises, both of the olde and the newe testament: t I will bring the blinde by a waie that they knowe not, and lead them by pathes that they haue not knowne: I will make darkneſſe light before them, and crooked thinges ſtreight: theſe thinges will I doe vnto them, and not forſake them: and againe: v the gates of hell ſhall not preuaile againſt you: but to confirme vs more and more, in the vnchangeableneſſe and certaintie of his goodneſſe towardes vs, and to let vs vnderſtand, though there bee infinite barres and lets betweene him and vs, ſo that his mercy cannot ſeeme to haue anie paſſage vnto vs, that yet hee will breake them all to peeces, and ouerthrowe x euerie high thing, that ſo we may plainly perceiue, and effectually & comfortablie feele, the incomprehenſible treaſure of his fauour towardes vs:

t Iſay 42.16.

v Math.16.18.

A ſingular comfort farre beyond expectation.

x 2.Cor.10.5.

If this be not comfortable, I know not what is: in which point of ſpeciall com-

The cause moving to write more largely of this point.

consolation, I write more, both the more willingly and largely vnto you, because I perceiue by your last (though long since sent vnto me, vnto which also I then shaped a short answere, supposing because I heard not from you, that had satisfied you) and by some reports of sundry, that loue vs both in the Lord (to which, for the further stirring of me vp thereto, I adde the daily thoughts and feares of mine own hart concerning your case) that you haue not onely bene terrible shaken for the time, but y sore buffeted, and that not with some one meane temptation, but with many great and grieuous assaultes: the consideration whereof raised vp such a thicke mist before your vnderstanding, whilest you dwelt too much, and ouerlong in the minding thereof, and in the beholding of your owne, both vnworthinesse and weakenesse, that as the comfortable sight of Gods grace and goodnes towards you in Jesus Christ, seemed for the time to be vanished from before you, yea altogether lost, (so you thought)

y and 12.7.

thought) in your selfe, and would haue perswaded others, that you were vtterly condemned and cast away.

But be not anie whit at all dismaied, with the violence and rage of this tempest, but rather comfort your selfe, yea assure your selfe of this, that Sathan dealeth herein no otherwise with you, than a cruel and bloud-thirstie captaine, besieging inuincible and irrepugnable hold, who at the first beginneth temperately and coldly (as you would say) as well for the sparing of his owne forces and charge, as to gaine some little credite with those that are beset: but when he seeth that preuayleth not, hee dooth by little and little increase the fiercenesse of his batterie, and the bitternesse of his assault: but not gayning that way neyther, he putteth it all at once vpon the last push, wherein hauing taken the foyle, hee is glad also to betake himselfe to a shamefull flight. And what though the cannons roare, yea the double cannons thunder in such sorte, that they make heauen and earth to shake

A reason or meane to respect this temtation.

A similitude.

(as

(as it were) and would seeme to iumble them altogether, yet in trueth they are nothing els but sure pledges of the wasting and wearing of your aduersaries forces, and dishonourable running awaie on the one side, and moste comfortable messengers on the other side, of your happie and ioyfull deliuerance approching, and euen at the dores: which as it plainely appeareth by this, that euen as a little before day breake, the darkenesse is greatest, and then afterwardes commeth moste comfortable light, steppe by steppe, and degree by degree, the Sunne with his brightnesse and heate, chasing away all those thicke mistes and strong smelling fogs: so may we be certainly assured of it, by the manifold examples of the word, and particularly of him that was possessed, z with a dumbe and deafe deuil, out of whome when our sauiour charged him to come, and to enter no more into him, he cried and rent him sore, and left him for dead, taking (as we say) his pentworthes then vppon him

a A similitude

z Mar. 9. 25. 26.

because

knowne he knewe, that as his time was but short, so hee should neuer after molest or vexe him.

For your sinnes which you complaine of, I suppose verely that they are more in your owne iudgement, than in the sight of all the worlde beside, before whom notwithstanding your hard accusing of your self, you haue through Gods goodnesse liued an vpright and vnblamable life, and that not onely in the testimonie of them that feare God, but in the witnesse also of them that a are without, which ought notwithstanding the greatnesse of your assault in your sicke, to yeeld you no small comfort, that in the iudge not onely of those that can iudge rightly: (such as Gods children are, who haue their eyes inlightened by the knowledge of his truth) you haue carried your selfe christianly, and yet if you had failed, would in the b multitude of loue (according to their duetie) haue couered a multitude of transgressions, but in the iudgement of those, that are led with

Accusation of conscience for the sight and filthinesse of sinne.

a 1. Tim 3.7.

b Prou. 10, 12. 1. Pet. 4.8.

prying

spying and malicious eyes (who many times obserue in Gods seruantes, more than they should, or iustly can, and the rather for their profession and troubles sake) haue lead a harmeleſſe and irreprouеable conuersation.

Of the accusation of a tender conscience.

But let vs graunt that your owne heart accuseth you much. What then? Accusation implieth not conuictiõ, much lesse condemnation, specially in such a height as we imagine. And yet withall giue me leaue to councell you, not to beleeue it further then it bringeth the euidence of truth with it. This I am sure you cannot be ignorant of, that as the wicked want with profite & continuance that sting of hart (with profit I say, because though they haue it, it doth thẽ no good: and with continuance, because it is but as a flashe of lightning in them, rayſed vp for their greater iudgement, as soone vanishing as it doth appeare) so the godly looking too much vppon themselues, and their sinnes, and secluding both from sight and sense, the viewe and memorie of Gods mercies,

The wicked haue no profitable feeling of their sins.

The feeling of the godly.

by

ly to hard and heauie burthens vppon their owne soules.

We thinketh this rather woulde be stood vppon, that sith euen from that, that woundeth them most, I meane the continuall charging and accusing of themselues, men that haue their minds inlightened from God, may reape singular consolations, they should labour euen from thence to gather strong comfortes vnto themselues against their temptations, which they may doe by this holy consideration, that the heart wounded with the dailie sight and sense of sinne that is past, is pushed forward thereby to speedy and vnfeigned repentance (God to that end setting the same before them, that so in the lothsomnesse thereof they might make haste vnto him) which otherwise as in the want thereof, it could not so much as thinke vpon, much lesse performe: is strengthned also against sinne that is to come, because hardly haue anie bene found to fall into that which they haue with vpright and daylie iudgement misliked, in

themselues principally, and in others secondarily, the feare of the former, causing them to keepe a good watche ouer themselues in the latter: and is prouoked in and by themselues, tenderly to pitie & earnestly to pray for such, whose state that waie foorth, they knowe and feel by experience in themselues, to be as lamentable and as much to be regarded as their owne. All which bringing with them the glory of God, their own benefite and other mens good, that euen in the least thinges, cannot but yeeld them comfort, that seriously thinke thereupon, vnlesse they will deeme Gods honour light, or their owne comfort base, or the loue of the faithfull, and their welfare, a meane, yea a vilde thing.

But we will put the case, that your sinnes were as huge and as high, as your selfe take them to be: yea let vs imagine that they had spread thēselues, throughout both heauen and earth, and did reach from the one end of the world to the other, yet who can, will, or dare deme, but that as God himselfe,

so

so his mercies towardes vs in Iesus Christ, *c* ouerreacheth them euery way, and the rather sith his meanes are no waie in this life more euidently manifested, than in the forgiuenesse of the sinnes of his seruantes: Concerning which truetth we may, and ought to be certainly perswaded, not onely by reason, taken from the infinitenesse of Gods owne nature, who beeing infinite himselfe can haue nothing in him, but that which is infinite, and therefore his mercie beeing in him, must also be infinite, with whom (howsoeuer) our sins be innumerable, as in respect of our selues: *d* for who vnderstandeth his iniquitie, or is able to account his transgressions? yet they are finite and certaine as in regard of himselfe, that *e* counteth the number of the starrs, and calleth them all by their names: but also from the large and moste faithfull promises, that in euerie place almost of his word, for the vnderpropping of our weake fayth, hee hath plainly and plentifully propounded vnto vs: amongest which

c Co. 3. 20. The mercy of God in this life chiefly appeareth in the forgiuenesse of sinne.

A reason taken of Gods nature, which is infinite.

d Psal. 19. 12.

e & 147. 4.

Of Gods promises.

f &103.12 euen these most sweete sayinges, seeme not of the least reckoning: *f* As farre as the East is from the West, so farre hath hee removed our sinnes from vs. Againe in another place: *g* Though our sinnes were as Crimsin, they shal be made white as Snow, though they were red as Skarlet, they shall be as wooll. And again: *h* Where sinne hath abounded, there grace hath more than abounded: with sundrie such like, with which I knowe you are acquainted, as having laid them vp in your heart, for the peace of the same, and hauing expressed them with your mouth for the testification of your ioy.

g Isa.1.18.

h Rom. 5.20.

Hitherto I haue laboured, neither vnsoundly, as in regard of Gods truth propounded, nor vnprofitably, as in respect of you afflicted, nor vndutifully, as in consideration of my selfe trauailing, generally to deliuer generall comfortes against generall transgressions.

Now it remaineth that I come, to applie particular consolations, (as if it were) speciall medicines and plaisters,

to

to those peculiar offences & griefes, that you saie are in your selfe, and it hath pleased you to acquaint me withall, to this end (as I take it verily) that of my poore store, and penurie indeede, you might yet receiue some spirituall relicke and comfort. What measure of mercie I haue receiued that way, hee that hath bene pleased freely to giue the same vnto me, best knoweth. Howbeit howe small or great soeuer it be, this doth not a little incourage me to a liberall vse of the same, that I knowe certainly I shall not decrease mine owne by that I bestow vpon others, but rather increase the same much, it seruing me, (as the widdowes * pitcher of oyle did in the dayes of Elisha, being miraculously increased) not onely to inable me, in some sort to pay my debts, though it be but fiue shillinges in the pound (as we saie) but the rest being sufficient, for my selfe and my children to liue vpon.

* 4. King. 4. 2. &c.

But to those thinges which you obiect against your selfe, and to that first which you first put downe.

Obiections answeree.

You saie you are greatly troubled with manifold feares & much doubting. I beleeue it to be true. And who would not be of that minde, if they considered you, but as a man: howe much more then, if they behold you as a godly man, in whom such things are better seen, because naturall blindnesse is somewhat removed, and more felt, because hardnesse of hart, and benummednesse is in some measure taken away: yea I am so farre of from thinking these thinges to be discomfortable to you (though as feare & doubting are in you, I cannot approoue them, because they are in vs tainted thorow the corruption of nature) that frō the same as I take it, you may reape and receiue singular consolation, not onely in this respect, that they bring forth in you good and gracious effects, of hartie praier to almightie God, carefull watching ouer your selfe, tender pitie and compassion towards others &c. and all these in a greater measure, than you feel & wil confesse: (& yet herein me thinketh you should do wel to giue glory

to

to God, and according to grace receiued
peeld his children a notable portion of
comfort) but whilest you are herein be-
come like to ꝯ saints & seruants of God
who haue gone before you in the flesh, &
in the faith, yea euen to Iesus christ him
selfe, the eternal sonne of the eternall fa-
ther. Dauid was a k man according to
Gods own hart, & vpon whō the Lord
had set his eie & delight for much good:
and yet who more afflicted this way thē
he, he conceiuing of God, as of one that
was in vtter displeasure with him, and
that had cleane forgotten him, and quite
takē his mercy from him: Of which if
you doubt, may it please you to peruse,
Psal. 6. 38. 42. 77. 88. 102. (whither also
for shortnes sake I do referre you) & I
doubt not but you shalbe thoroughly per-
swaded therof. m Paul was an elect &
chosen vessel, and that not onely to car-
ry Christs name among the gentiles,
but euen vnto eternal life: and yet n least
he should be exalted out of measure
thorow the abundāce of reuelations,
there was giuen vnto him a prick in

k 2. Sam. 13. 14.

l Psal. 6. & 38. & 42. & 77. & 88. & 102.

m Act. 9. 15. & 26. 18.

n 2. Cor. 12. 7

the fleshe, and the Angell Satan to buffet him: which least we should imagine to be peculiar vnto him, she doth in another place affirme of him selfe and the faythfull together: *o* Though wee doubt, yet we despaire not. But what stand we repeating these petie examples (which though they be pregnant for the purpose whereunto they are produced, are not yet matchable with that that followeth) sith we may most liuely see it in him, who (though hee was compassed about with our flesh, was yet free from the taint or staine of anie corruption, and though he had naturall passions, was vtterly voyd of extremitie or sinne in them, or any thing els whatsoeuer) being the very true and naturall sonne of God, and equall with the father, was so farre humbled and brought lowe, that hee did yet notwithstanding through fearefull feeling of Gods wrath, and extreme anguishe in himselfe, demand of his father *p* whie hee had forsaken him: Of whome also the Apostle witnesseth by the spirit,

o Heb.2.17.& 4.15.

p Mat.27.46.

q that

q that in the daies of his flesh, he did offer vp his prayers and supplications, with strong crying, and teares vnto him, that was able to saue him from death, and was heard also in that which hee feared. Nowe if the strength of temptations coulde bring our sauiour to so lowe an estate, and hard condition, (as a man would saie) so that he seemed, not onely to be at the verie brinke, but to be plunged into the pit, not of feare alone, but of doubting and distrustfulnesse, (as it might seeme) who yet notwithstanding was the onely beloued of God, and had receiued all the graces of the Spirite generallie, and therefore no doubt the spirite of fortitude and power particularlie, in moste absolute and full measure: shall wee thinke it strange that the sonnes and daughters of God, (who during the time of their mortalitie vpon earth, haue sinne dwelling in their brittle bodies: & who also, howsoeuer they be beloued of God, are not affected for their owne sakes, but for his sake alone: and who not-

q Heb. 5. 7.

notwithstanding many gifts they haue receiued, for the gathering together and building vp of themselues and of the fellowship of saintes, haue yet not so much as a sparke or crum of grace, compared with the infinite and incomprehensible treasures of Gods goodnesse in Christ) be greatly assaulted, and daily beaten on euerie side, yea as seemeth vnto them selues and others, sometimes ouerwhelmed: Neyther herein alone standeth your comfort (good sir) yea our comfort, that we are r conformed and made like vnto the seruantes of God, yea, the only begotten sonne of God, in his and their sufferinges: but that as hee caused his almightie s strength to appeare in their poore weakenesse, making t an issue out of their temptations for them, that they might escape, that the like mercie, fauour and strength hee will shew vnto vs, and in vs, notwithstanding our infirmities: because that as the v Arme of God, is not (thorowe length of time, or working of wonders anie maner of waie) shortned,

r Rom 8.19.

s 2.Cor.12 9.

t 1.Cor.10.13

v Esay.59.1.

shewed, so is the fatherly affection, that hee setteth vppon his children vtterly vnchangeable. Whereof yet wee may be the better assured, because hee hath performed these great workes, not onely in some of his excellent seruantes, through his grace & strength alone, but in Iesus Christ our heade and Captaine, whose victorie as in other respectes, so in this particularlie is in such sorte become ours, that we cannot chuse, but in him become more x than conquerours (as the Apostle sayth.) For if his absolute obedience, be sufficient to take awaie our sinnes, and the imputation of his righteousnes, powerfull inough, to make vs stand as righteous and innocent, in the presence of our heauenly father, why shoulde not his vanquishing both of death, and y him that had the power of death, that is the deuill, be an assured pledge also of our ouercomming, sith we know and beleeue that hee conquered not for hymselfe but for vs, that wee in hym might bee, (as was euen nowe sayd a little

x Rom.8.37

y Heb.2.14

a little before) more than conquerours?

Of great impatience or waywardnes.

The second point that you complain of, as in regard of your selfe, is, the great impatience and waywardnesse, that you finde at home, in your owne soule, the same sometimes breaking out so farre, that it is not onely made manifest into God and men, through disquiet behauiour, and vnsauorie words, but manie times also breaketh forth into bitter cursinges.

Answere.

This I cannot chuse but acknowledge to be hard and heauie, as in respect of your selfe, and the iniquitie high and great, as in respect of God.

A Comfort.

Notwithstanding euen against this also you shal well perceiue and finde, that the Lord hath prouided comfort for you, yea comfort in his holy worde: which word of his, as it farre exceedeth all humaine speach and writing, that euer haue ben, are, or shalbe, and is indeede to speake properly, the onely truth: so doubtlesse the comfortes therein contained, infinitely surmount all worldly consolations

ons whatsoeuer, and are indeede onelie to be taken for the true ioyes.

In which respect I would haue you not to be afraid, for the magnifying of Gods singular mercies, and for the extolling of the comfortes of the Lord, to your spirituall ioy, to vrge and presse against your selfe, as hard as you can, and as farre as anie maner of way you may with truth, your owne fame, and yet I am sure you shall neuer find it to reache further, than to blaspheme against the father or the sonne, to which depth of iniquitie for anie thing I know it hath not attained. But suppose it had ascended so high: doth not yet our sauiour (being truth it selfe) in the word of all truth assure vs, 2 that euerie sinne and blasphemy shalbe forgiuen vnto men, yea euē blasphemie against the sonne of God? which yet that wee might be the better assured of, we haue a comfortable example in Paule, who confesseth of himselfe against himselfe, for the plaine proofe of the truth of this point, that ouer and besides that he

2 Matth. 12. 32.

Paule.

a 1.Tim.1 13. he was a a persecutor, he was a blas-
phemer, and yet found fauour with the
Lord to obteine forgiuenesse. To which
particular example, tending doubtlesse
to no small comfort of conscience, you
may adde, for the further not onely in-
larging, but strengthning of your own
ioy, that the sinnes that you haue com-
mitted, or the blasphemie that you haue
spoken, haue not beene done or layd with
a high hand, or of prepensed malice, but
rather of infirmitie (though happily a-
gainst knowledge) and the same pro-
ceeding from a passionate and troubled
spirite, rather than of any wilfulnesse,
which weakenesse in you Satan by
Gods appointment hauing you vppon
the racke (not to fetche any thing from
you against your selfe, but to make your
patience, constancie and faith, playnly
known to others, effectually felt in your
selfe, and graciously accepted in hys
owne eyes) hath vsed as a meane, more
and more to trouble your heart, but yet
not to ouerwhelme your hope. And euen
this consideration of the maner of of-
fending

sending, haue Gods saintes obserued in themselues, not so much to lessen their transgressions (for they knowe that euerie sinne in it owne nature a deserueth death) but to comfort their consciences in the dayes of their distresse, without which indeede, they can hardlie serue God religiouslie, or faithfullie discharge anie ducties either publike or priuate. And this to be true, we may amongest others behold it in Paule, who sayth of hymselfe in the height and depth of his grieuous iniquities, a that hee was receiued to mercie: for that hee did it ignorantly thorow vnbeliefe. And if this afforded hym comfort, I see no reason why it shoulde not yeeld you consolation, speciallie sith your sinnes, (for anie thing wee knowe) are much lesse than his, and you haue to deale with the selfe same God, who is nowe, as then, b slowe to vvrath, and of great compassion, passing by sins, and forgiuing iniquities, and restoring mercie vnto thousands of generations. Neyther is that

a Rom. 6. 23.

a 1. Tim. 1. 13.

b Psal. 103 8. Exod 34. 6

of

An other testimonie to comfort.

of lesse force in my minde, to lessen your sinne and to increase your comfort, that either before the offence committed, or in the deede doing, or after it was performed, you had a spirite within you, that did not onely tell you it was euill, but checked you and controlled you, in & about the action it selfe: whereunto also though you were drawen, and did for the time sleepe, and delight therein, yet would it not giue you rest, till suche time as it had caused you, vnfeignedlie to hate it, humbly to confesse it, and in a notable measure of *b* godly sorrow, soundly to repent you of the same, which thing as the wicked doubtlesse, seldome (or not at all) attaine vnto, for they notwithstanding the vglinesse of sinne loue it, and hide their transgressions continuallie: so are they special graces, bestowed vpon such penitent sinners, as God is pleased, thorowe his mercy in Christ, to call vnto himselfe: which as it may appeare by many particular examples of the holy scripture, so seemeth it to me to be iustificable, by

b 2. Cor. 7. 10.

The wicked hate not their sinnes.

A speciall grace to gods children to hate their sinnes.

these

these words of the Apostle. *c* The flesh lusteth against the spirite, and the spirite against the flesh, so that you cannot doe the same thinges you would. And in another place, *d* what I woulde that doe I not but what I hate, that doe I. c Gal.5.17. d Rom.7.19.

Pull vp your heart therefore (I pray you) and be of good comfort, sith that from the sinnes that you haue committed, specially in the maner of the doing of them, and from your selfe specially in the wrestling affections that you find in your selfe against sinne, God and his word would haue you to reape comfort and consolation. An exhortation.

And as for your particular case of a troublous heart, and disquiet spirite, what is it els I pray you, but euen that that hath taken holde of Gods saintes, as well as of you? doth not Jeremiah himselfe curse (as it were) himselfe, and the mother that bare him, and brought him into the worlde, when hee saith: *e* Woe is me, my mother that thou hast born me a man of conten- e Iere.15.10.

tion to all this land: And doth not Ionah, when God debated with him about the withering of the gourd, that God prepared to be a shadowe ouer his head, and to shelter him from heate, and demaunded of him *f* whether hee did well to be angrie for the gourd, did not hee (I saie) answere and say I doe well to be angrie vnto death: And yet these were excellent men and worthie prophetes, and such as had receiued rare grace from God: no marueile then though men of lesse fauour fall more: But moste plaincie shall you see this in Iob, of whome I pray you giue me leaue to write largely for your good. Hee opened his mouth so wide, that he bitterly cursed the night wherin he was conceiued, & the day wherin he was borne: yea, he thundred out execrations against many excellent creatures of God, which could not bee but blasphemie against the Creator himselfe, whose glorye is not onely much ioyned with, but greatlie appeareth in the woorke of his owne

f Iona.4.9.

g Iob.3.1.&c.

handes

landes, as wee may perceiue by this that Salomon saieth: *h* hee that oppresseth the poore (or as it is in an other place) mocketh him, reprooueth or reprocheth him that made him. Yea if wee reade hys Booke with iudgement, wee shall see that hee doeth not onelie thus indirectlie (as a man woulde say) in his wordes, oppose himselfe against God, while he hurleth out heapes of curses against his workes, but proceedeth so farre, that hee seemed not either affrayde or ashamed, to take God (euen God himselfe) by the face, and to accuse him, (though most falslie) of iniustice, as maie euidentlie appeare, as well by Iobes owne woordes, and discourses, in many places of his sayde booke, as by the Lordes owne voice and answeare, out of the whyrlewinde, Chapter *i* 38.39. And yet notwithstanding, this man found fauour with the Lord, not onely to bee restored to a farre better estate in worldly respectes than before hee hadde, but also to

h Pro.17.& 14.31.

i Iob.38.& 39.

haue the iniquitie of his hart and mouth freely pardoned, yea hee himselfe, and that by the holie Ghost himselfe, to be made a worthie paterne and example, to all ages to come, as of manie vertues, so particularly of patience, which you say you lacke: for proofe whereof remember what Saint Iames saith of him: k yee haue heard of the patience of Iob, and haue knowne what ende the Lord made: for the Lord is verie pitifull and mercifull. Where marke I pray you, that hee notwithstanding all his frowardnesse against his friends, who came (no doubt with a minde) to visit and comfort him howsoeuer, either throwe his own corruption, or their cunning, he was prouoked to saie, l miserable comforts are you, all the sorte of you: notwithstanding his horrible execration of the good creatures of god, which neuer did him hurt, but manie waies tended to profite, and pleasure him, for ease, comfort, health, and strength: notwithstanding all his inward impatience and fretting against

k Iame. 5. 11.

l Iob. 16. 2.

God

God, and outward furie, and open charging of him, to doe him iniurie and wrong, is yet set before vs as a worthie patterne of patience, and a mirror of a milde and quiet spirite.

These thinges perhaps maie seeme straunge to you, and you in your imagination may suppose, that they can hardly agree well together.

But if you will labour wisely to discerne the worke of reformation and regeneration that God hath in his children from the remaynders of their owne corruption, that beeing alwaies good and excellent in it selfe, and this naught and abhominable, yea manie times also much darkening the other: and consider that notwithstanding our sinnes, God is mercifully pleased in Jesus Christ, to cure and to couer them all, and to receiue vs vnto himselfe in him, not onely as though we had neuer sinned, but as if wee had actually and really fulfilled all righteousnesse: and haue receiued thorow the holie ministerie of the worde, and the gracious wor-

The worke of regeneration or reformation.

king of of the spirite, the eie of faith to see, and the hand of faith to lay holde of, and to apply this particularlie vnto your owne selfe, in the state and condition wherein you are, you shall easilie knowe in your vnderstanding, faithfullie feele in your soule, stedfastlie beleeue in your heart, and frankelie confesse with your mouth this woonder difference, and most comfortable point, wherein also for the better instruction, or perswasion of you, or both, I will (by your good patience) spend a line or two.

Of ioy and feare in one person, and at one time.

Ioy and feare doubtlesse, in humaine iudgement seeme one of them to be set against another: and yet in the holy gospell, it is reported of the women, which went to see Christes sepulchre, that vpon the glorious apparition of Gods angell at that place, and the declaration of Christes resurrection, [m] they departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great ioy: feare as I take it, at the strangenesse of the sight, and much ioy, for the comfortable and gladsome tidinges that they had heard. And what

m Math. 28.8.

I

I pray you is indeede more contrarie one vnto another, than beliefe and vnbeliefe? And yet the father of the sicke childe in the Gospell, hauing receiued this comfortable speache from our Sauiour himselfe, n that all thinges are possible vnto him that beleeueth, cryed out with teares, and that when he prayed, Lorde I beleeue, helpe my vnbeliefe, calling and counting, that beginning of fayth, that God had wrought in him beliefe, and the doubtfulnesse and distrust of his owne hart, vnbeliefe. And if it haue beene so in hym and others, and wee stedfastly beleeue the same, because wee see it is reuealed vnto vs in the written worde of God, why shoulde wee not perswade our selues, that the lyke is, and may bee in vs, because Gods workes are this waie, nowe as then, all alike.

The like of beliefe, and vnbeliefe.

n Marke. 23. 24.

But wee are hyndered from the comfortable sight, and the ioyfull feeling hereof, our while by suffering of oure myndes to bee wholie taken

vp, with the beholding of our owne sinnes onely, forgetting in the meane while the graces and fauours, that God hath bene pleased freely to bestow vpon vs, for his glorie and our good: and an other while by imagining, that whilest we haue not perfection of mercie and goodnesse, here we haue receiued no acceptable measure of grace and loue: the former of these being dangerous, vtterly to ouerwhelme vs with distrust, and the latter prest and readie to cause vs to deface Gods mercies in vs, but both of them powerfull, to detayne and withhold vs, from yeelding due glorie to God, whilest which way soeuer wee looke, wee thinke we haue nothing (hauing yet receiued something) † to yeeld him not holie praise and thankes, o the best and onely sacrifice, that he requireth at our handes for all his fauours.

o Psal 50.14. 23. & 69.32. & 11.16.12.13.

As for that which seemeth heerein most to wound you, namely, your blasphemie against God (as you call it) or speaking euill of him, I would pray you, ouer and besides that that hath bin

said

ſaid alreadie, to weigh this following, and ſee whether it may not ſatisfie you, concerning that great doubt, yea or no.

A compariſon or ſimilitude.

Put the caſe that ſome one, that had borne you ſingular good will, not onely for worldly conſiderations, but in the truth alſo: and as a ſound teſtimonie thereof, had euerie where as occaſion had bene offered, giuen you a due and iuſt commendation, for the good partes that be in you: and yet afterwardes puffed vp in a haughtie imagination of his owne heart, or forgetting your great fauours ſhewed him, or his own former friendſhip profeſſed and practiſed, or miſled by ſome lewd and hypocriticall companie, (as al and euerie one of theſe thinges, are ſtrong and mightie (no doubt) to carrie men awaie) ſhould eyther by himſelfe, or together with them in companie, either thinke or ſpeake euill of you: Tell me I pray you howe you would behaue your ſelfe towardes ſuch a one, ſpeciallie if hee ſhould vnfeignedly confeſſe his offence, and proteſt ſincere ſorrowfulneſſe of heart for his ſame:

sinne: surely I doubt not but the p loue of God shedde abroad into your heart, would make you ready & willing, with a sound assertiō, to forget and to forgiue and to receiue him euen as though he had not fallen. And shal or can you, (which in respect of Gods infinite fauor towardes you, haue not so much as a crum of loue towardes men) shewe yet notwithstanding, such a largess of the same: and god q who is loue it selfe (as the Apostle saith) be skant and pinching, as in this respect: for mine own part, rather than I would thinke or say so, I would hold and affirme, that the bottomlesse depths of the huge and great Ocean, might be dried vp & want water, before the ponds and the cesternes, that in a parched land men haue digged vnto thēselues, or anie thing that is more absurd & vnreasonable than this, if anie such can be found.

p Rom. 5. 5.

q 1. Ioh. 4. 8.

Doubting of his election to eternal life.

The last but yet that not of the least importance, wherewith your heart is troubled, is that you cannot feele your selfe to be one of those, whome God hath marked out to eternall life.

Wherein

Wherein I would first haue you to know, and perſwade your heart of this, that as the miſeries of the reprobate, and their condemnation alſo, is more, I will not ſay than is well felt, for feeling they haue little or none, but well conceiued their harts not beeing fit to thinke either of their ſinne, or iudgement due vnto them for the ſame: ſo many times the fauour of God is certaynly muche more, towardes and in his ſeruantes, than eyther they themſelues, or others for them can well perceiue. For as it is moſt true, that naturall blindneſſe, and benummednelle of heart, with a ſenſual delight the wicked take in ſinne, purſuing all maner of iniquitie with pleaſure, wil not ſuffer thē to ſee their damnable eſtate, at the leaſt wiſe to dwell vpon the contemplation of it with fruite, becauſe thorowe impenitencie of heart, they bee r held captiues of Satan at his pleaſure: ſo it is as certaine, that by reaſon of the remaynders of a darke minde, which reſteth euen in the godly (as yet) in parte, vnreformed, they

The reprobate cannot truely conceiue, much leſſe feele their condemnation.

r 2. Tim. 2. 26.

be

be sometimes as farre off from conceiuing spirituall fauours from God. And no marueile, because being spirituall
1.Cor.2.14 things, they must be spiritually discerned: and we knowe, that as other graces, so that of a discerning spirite, is not onely in vs impaire, but many times seemeth to be quenched in vs, and hidden from others thorowe the ashes of our corruption. And what reason can be shewed to the contrarie, but that if want of sight and feeling in the wicked can for the time (though not for euer) put out feare and paine, and all sense of the same: but also that the reliques of sinne in the righteous, and the sight they haue of it, and the feare and griefe of heart that they conceiue for it, should for the time, though not alwaies, bleare and deface, the hope and the ioy, that God would haue them to conceiue, Satan also in his malice working no doubt in all these temptations of the wicked, and the godly, that so he might (if he could tell how) preuaile vpon all, both good and bad.

By

By which you may well perceiue, that in this most high, yet most comfortable point, you are to goe beyond your owne reache and feeling, yea to depart from your selfe: (who by reason, sometimes of blindnesse, and sometimes of partialitie, are vnfit to bee a iudge in this cause) that so being spoiled of trust and confidence in your selfe, or in the arme of flesh and bloud (as where you may repaire vnto him, that alone is the God of all strength, both outward and inward, and who will indeede for you and all his, effect that, which shalbe most meete for his glorie, and your eternall comforts.

What the godly in such a case, ought to doe.

t Iere. 17. 5

And this is the second thing that I would pray you well to weigh, namely, that as according to the truth of the holie scriptures, God hath pleased, throwe the infinite multitude of his mercies, in Iesus Christ, to elect you to life euerlasting, t before the foundations of the world were laid: so hath he in time plainly manifested vnto you, and by you vnto others, that his great grace of your eternall

t Epist. 1. 4

eternall election, first in vouchsafing you, (though vnworthie of your selfe, yet for Christ Jesus his sake) thorowe the ministerie of his holy worde, and by the powerfull working of his blessed spirite, an effectual calling, for he t no sooner spake vnto you, but withal pearsed your eares, and boared your heart to vnderstand and beleeue, he working in you also this readinesse, with vnfeigned affection to saie, v speake Lord for thy seruant heareth: God dealing with you heerein for your soule, as hee hath done alwaies with you for your body, that is bestowing vppon you, the spirituall meanes of his mercie, and making them mightie in you, to worke his will, not vnto iudgement, as in the wicked, but to eternall saluation, as in his saintes and seruantes. And this I take to be that, which the Apostle saith. Roman.8. x Whom he predestinate, them also he called. Secondly by giuing you care and conscience, to adorne these excellent graces, of his eternall election from before all times, and effectual

t Act.13.48. & 16.14.

v 1.Sam 3.10.

The spirituall meanes of Gods mercie.

x Rom.8.30.

effectuall vocation in time, with the frutes of faith, and the deedes of blessed obedience, and that both in the services of pietie towards his maiestie, you having a minde to be often and earnest with him in prayer and thankesgiuing, adioyning thereto for your better direction therein, dayly reading of the word, deepe meditation, and christian conference therein: and also in the duties of charitie towardes men, you not onely not detayning from anie, that which belongeth vnto them, but rendring vnto euerie one that which is right & equall, and specially hauing care of the cõmunion of saints, y vweeping there with them that weep, and reioycing with thē that reioyce. And this is that that the Apostle saith in another place, that z God hath chosen vs in Christ, that we should be holy & without blame before him in loue. And againe: a The strong foundatiõ of God remaineth sure, & hath this seal, the lord knoweth who are his: & let euery one that calleth on the name of Christ depart from

The duties of pietie.

Of charitie.

y Rom. 12. 15

z Ephes. 1. 4

a 2. Tim. 2. 19.

b peter.1.10. Why these duties are propounded to vs in the word.

from iniquitie. In which respect also it is, that Peter admonisheth vs, *b* to giue diligence to make our calling and election sure, by good vvorkes.

Not that eyther the one or the other, either as in respect of God, are vncertaine, *c* for his giftes and calling are such, as he repenth him not thereof: are vnsure, as in regard of our selues, because we haue found thorow his goodnesse in vs (though not that that wer should, yet) a minde bowable and ready to harken vnto, to loue and obey the fatherly voyce and calling of our gracious God. But therefore are these thinges propounded vnto vs in the word, on the one side to stop the mouthes of carelesse blasphemers, who in the vaine imagination of their owne heartes, feare not to affirme, that if they be elected, they may liue as they list: and on the other side to lift vp the weakned spirites of many of Gods deare seruantes, who finding eyther the faith of their election, or the fruites following the same, fewe and skant in them, began to call their elec-

c.Rom.11.29.

tion

tion into question: wherein ouer and
besides the discomfortes and discou-
ragementes, that causelesly they cast
vpon themselues, they doe great iniurie
to God, whilest they make him that is
certaine in his purposes and acts, to be
d as wauering as mutable man, and
then to be subiect to alteration & change
when they idellie fantasie or imagine
the same. Yea they speake contrarie to
common sense and reason: for if the sins
that are from our selues, may (as they
ought indeede) iustly cast vs down, shall
not the graces that are in vs from god,
be much more mightie to raise vs vp:
What, is God become lesse than man:
or are his mercies inferiour to mans
transgressions:

d Num.23.19.
Isa.55.8.
Ier.1.17.

But we will put the case that we fai-
led in those good workes, that that hi-
therto hath bin put downe, & that out of
the very word of trueth, concerning the
fruites of our faith were false: yet see,
what euen in such a case also, if it wer so,
the holy Ghost saith, for our full per-
swasion and resolute comfort: It is not

The whole worke of saluation dependeth altogether on Gods mercie in Iesus Christ.

in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God, that sheweth mercy, that so the whole worke of our saluation, and euerie part and peece of it bee ascribed onely and wholie, to his free fauour towardes vs in Iesus Christ. For as this is sure, that God saueth not vs for our good workes, be they neuer so manie or excellent, because hee shall haue alwaies some thing for matter, or maner or ende and all, to say against them, and vs for their sakes, and to holde that, were indeede to euacuate Gods free mercie, and to annihilate Christes sufferings, and to puffe vp flesh and bloud beyond all measure and trueth: so he will not condemne vs (vs I saie, and not men) because of our euill workes, though they be neuer so manie and grieuous (alwayes prouided that no man abuse this doctrine of trueth and comforte, to licentiousnesse and carnalitie, nor extend it beyond the persons of whome we meane it: namely the elect and faithfull, who as they haue receiued this sweete pro-

mise

mise from God, *f* that to them that are in Christ there is no condemnation, so they haue this giuen vnto them that they walke not after the flesh, but after the spirite) *g* For hee will haue mercie on him, to whome he will shewe mercie, and he will haue compasion on him, on whome hee will shewe compasion. And this is it that the Lorde hym selfe sayth in Esaiah: *h* I euen I am hee that putteth awaie their iniquities for myne owne sake, and will not remember theyr sinnes. And in Jeremiah, establishing (as it were) a newe contract with his Seruauntes, hee make Iesus a principall part of the couenaunt: *i* That hee will forgue all theyr iniquities, and remember theyr sinnes no more: or as it is alleadged by the holie Ghost in the eight Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrues, I will be mercifull to theyr vnrighteousnesse, and I will remember their sinnes, and their iniquities no more, vsing all these

f & 8.1.

g Exod.33.19. Rom 9.15.

h Isa.43.25.

i Iere.31.34. Heb 8.12.

wordes, of vnrighteousnesse, sinnes, iniquities, &c. to allure vs, that neyther the heynousnesse, nor the multitude of our transgressions, shall for euer seperate betweene the Lord & vs, but that of his infinite mercie, he will receiue vs, as though we had not offended.

A comparison or similitude.

Of which wee may be the better assured by this, that if we would giue credit vnto the worde of an earthly man, specially if wee had some experience of his fidelitie, and that in matter of great importance (and yet we know mē to be but men, that is fraile & inconstant) we should much more beleeue the truth of the eternal our God (confirmed vnto vs by the deathe and bloudshedding of his sonne, the best pledge of immutabilitie that can be, and that in causes of greatest weight concerning vs) who alwaies k remaineth like vnto himselfe, and will rather than he will fayle vs in hys promise, or falter with vs in the performance of the same, giuing vs lesse than hee hath said, will inlarge himselfe, (I cannot saie, beyond his word and truth,

k Mala 3.6.

ſe that remaineth alwaies as large as himſelfe, and God the God of truth ſhall neuer bee found a lier) but beyond our heart and hope I am ſure.

And ſurely for your ſelfe, in my mind this is one point that much perſwadeth me, and may yeeld you comfort, that neuer can be vtterly taken aware (howſoeuer it may for the time be ſomewhat leſſened, that you belong vnto the election of God, & are (as it were) *l* grauen vpon the palme of his right hand, that you haue not onely patiently ſuſtained, (which is a rare vertue) but mightily vanquiſhed and ſubdued (which is a greater grace doubtleſſe) in him that is the God of your ſtrength, many and the ſame long and bitter temptations, which had you not belonged to God, and hee himſelfe had not reſerued you for daies and times not onely of comfort in this life: but of eternall ioy, you could not haue indured, much leſſe ouercome: for as this is a certaine truth, ý *m* manie are the miſeries of the righteous, but the Lord deliuereth him out of all,

l Iſa 49.16.

m Pſal 34.19.

and that his children are conquerours ouer many assaults, by the strength and power that they haue receiued from him: so our onely temptation, and the same as short and small as may be, is able to quaile the strongest Giant, amongst the reprobate and to throw him downe headlong, into the bottomlesse pit of hell, as experience of the wicked (who in this respect to withstand, are weaker then water) and sundrie particular examples of former ages, and of our present time, doe playnely proue vnto vs, if I thought it conuenient to alleadge them.

n Iohn. 4 33. Rom 8.37.

This you see my minde, and poore iudgement, concerning your scruples, in such measure and maner deliuered, as God hath inabled me. Where also I must confesse I would gladly end, as being almost weary in my selfe, and tedious (I feare me) vnto you, sauing that the duetie of holie loue that I beare you, will not suffer mee to let slippe a necessarie admonition, that euen nowe commeth to minde, and sauing also,

that

that your present distressed estate (as I feare) calleth for the inlarging of my selfe, so farre as I may accomplishe some more particular course of comforte, than as yet I haue deliuered.

Touching the former of these two, let mee intreate you, (I beseeche you) as the trueth is, not to imagine as I knowe some doe, that there are alwayes like effectes and fruites of Gods grace in the hearetes, and conuersation of hys people, I meane eyther as in regard of feeling, or action, for wee knowe by that, that we haue noted in others, and obserued in our selues (if euer God gaue vs grace to marke the one, or the other) that there is euerie day, yea almost euery houre in a daye, an entercourse of the same, God by hys spirite manie tymes moouing vs to good thinges, and ouerruling in the strength thereof, our corruption: and sometymes agayne the power of oure iniquitie, preuayling, and alwayes getting the vpper hand,

An admonition.

the Lord (no doubt) thereby prouiding, for hys glorye, whilest wee attribute all the praise of our well doing vnto him, (to whome indeede alone all praise and honour belongeth) and for our good and that in a double respect, not onely whilest by this meanes wee are made humble and lowly, before him and men, and in our owne eyes especiallie, hauing speciall recourse vnto him by praier, for heauenly strength, and comming to our brethren, for such spirituall aid, as they haue receiued from him: but also whilest we learne, on the one side to loth that which is from our selues, as corrupt and defiled, and on the other side to cherish and foster that which is from him, as good and pure, according to that rule of the Apostle, o Quench not the spirits, despise not prophesie.

o 1. Thes. 5. 19 20.

A similitude.

The Sunne it selfe a verie glorious creature, is not, no not in the summer time, alwaies alike hote and bright, but sometimes is couered with cloudes, that keepe backe the brightnesse, & hinder the heate of the same from vs. The

like

like may we saie of another celestial bo-
dy, the moone it self, which ouer and be-
sides ꝧ ordinarie eclipses that it doth in-
dure, sometimes ascendeth higher, some-
times commeth lower, & is many times
in the winter season, especially kept from
vs, by thicke mists and darke fogs. Nei-
ther neede we for this to looke so high,
for from terrestriall or earthly bodies
may we perceiue the same. The trees
in the fields, and the plants and hearbs
in the gardens, all winter long not onely
want any good fruite, but seeme not
so muche as to haue a leafe on them,
yea the verie truncke and stocke it selfe
maketh shewe in mans eyes to be dead,
and to lacke that life, that we call vege-
tatiue. And yet there is a sappe or natu-
rall moysture, that lyeth hid in the root,
which when it is refreshed with the
heate of the sunne, and comforted as it
were, with the dewe that falleth from
heauen, will yet notwithstanding in due
time proue vnto vs, that the tree, plant,
or herbe, was neuer dead whatsoeuer
we supposed. But what neede we to go

An other.

Others.

out

out of our selues, and from our own bodies, to viewe this matter: we haue as plaine a demonstration as may be. Our bodies to daie fresh and lustie, and to morrowe wythered and dried vp, *p* as a skinne bottle that hangeth in the smoke: and yet in time raised vp againe to haue naturall moisture, and to performe with strength and agilitie, as woorthy deedes as before.

Another.

p Psal. 118. 83.

The application of these similitudes.

And euen such doubtlesse for a while is the state of the children of God, who thorow the heynous offences that they haue committed, & the strength of temptations, that they doe indure (specially when they are pressed vpon them by the sting of their own heart, or Satans malice) and wherein oftentimes thorow the power of naturall corruption, they lie sleeping & snorting (as it were) a great while, appeare vnto men (yea very many thinke and saie so of themselues) as persons forsaken of God, and remedie lesse in this life, and past hope of recouerie for that which is to come. It is true that such mens cases are (for the time) specially

specially before men & in thēselues, hard and heauie. And if wee shoulde say or thinke otherwise, wee shoulde contradict Gods truth, which telleth vs that g no afflictions (much lesse this great one) is for the present ioious, but grieuous rather, and stand vp against common sense and reason, which plainly proueth to our faces their condition to be pitifull.

g Heb. 12. 11.

And yet for all this, it is not as they affirme, desperate and vnrecouerable, but rather thought not as in respect of it selfe yet as in regard of the consolations that God intermingleth with it, and the good fruites that he bringeth foorth by it, very comfortable.

And therefore how ought you, & such as you are to be raised vp (I come now to the second point, namely consolation) vpon whome the Lorde himselfe hath sette such infallible notes of your adoption and election vnto eternall life in Iesus Christ: that no cloude that the enemie hath interposed betwixt you and God, or no myst that in imagination you haue raysed vp in your selfe,

A consolation

to

to stoppe the comfortable Sunne-shine of Gods fauour vnto you, nor no extreame frost or colde of winter, howsoeuer it bee harde or sharpe for the tyme, and sensibly felt of you, can kill the seed that is sowen in your heart, by Gods
r 1 Iohn.2.27. word and spirite, or disanull the r anoynting, wherewith you are sealed a
s Ephes.4.30 gainst the day of Christ: so louing, so faithfull and powerfull is God, in and for his Saintes, and that not onelie when they are assaulted with forrayne forces, but when they are assayed from within, and haue (as a man would say) the motions of their owne minde, and the imaginations of their owne hearts and heades, not only to conspire against them, but euen to betraie them into the handes of their most cruell and deadlie enemies. Howbeit, it may bee that you
Obiections answered. will saie, your selfe thinketh otherwise of of your selfe.

But be not your owne iudge I pray you, as wel because iudgement in y especially, belõgeth not to you, but vnto god,
t 1 Cor.4.4 t to whõ only it appertaineth to pronoũce aright

a right sentence: as also because the way is slipperie here, and men (yea otherwise good men) may easilie be deceiued.

For as in persons that are sicke in the bodie, it sundry times falleth out, that of som melancholike conceit in themselues, or feare that they haue to die, they receiue the sentence of death in thē selues, yea and sometimes the Physitions giue him ouer, and they are readye to take their leaue of them, and yet God the Lord of life, saith they shal liue, and as a proofe of his power, restoreth them from deathes doore: so is it many times, with Gods children, in this spirituall disease and sicknesse of their soule, wherein as it is much more easie to bee misled, than in bodily sickenesse, so many times when al haue forsaken vs, and we haue destituted our selues, and failed in our own spirites, yet God the ν God of all mercie, and father of all comfort, reneweth his vnspeakeable fauour vpon vs & calleth vs backe againe (as if it were) from death to life. Againe, as men that in their owne iudgments seeme sick vn-

A similitude.

ν 2. Cor. 1. 3

Another.

to

to death, and are so farre from ho-
ping after health, that they can not so
much as thinke of it, euen with ima-
gination, as manytimes wast and weare
aware, and bee brought to deathes doze
and yet for all that, the standers by, as
learned physitions, and faithfull friendes
for certaine and undoubted tokens
of happie health, and good recouerie, e-
uen such doubtes is the state and condi-
tion of many distressed in conscience: and
amongst the rest, your case particularlie,
wherein whatsoeuer you say of your
selfe, or vtter against your selfe, yet I &
many other, (though not the best physi-
tions, yet your vnfeigned familiars) that
haue nowe a long time knowne you in
God, and his truethe, haue seene in
you, since the daie and howre of our
firste acquaintaunce vntill this present
time, and yet still doe beholde such evi-
dencie & clearnes of the graces of Gods
spirite (notwithstanding your long and
continuall complaintes) as all the
smoke smuther, mystes and foggyes, and
whatsoeuer els els that Sathan by him
selfe

selfe and his suppostes, hath or can cast out against you, shall neuer bee able to take away the cleare sight of them from vs, or moue vs so much as once to doubt, of the comfortable reuiuing of them in you, euen vnto eternall lyfe. And I hope wee haue the spirit of God, and by the grace thereof, as also by the light of his Woorde, and experience that hee hath giuen vs, are able to deserue some thinge in this behalfe, though not so well in others, as in our selues (for that shall wee neuer bee able to doo) yet in others also.

Wherefore to make an end where I began, Be of good comfort (good sir) I beseech you, and waite with patience the Lords ioyfull appearing, whose you are doubtles, and whereof you may be assured, because you haue him x on your side, & therefore not feare, who shal or can be against you: & because also you haue his children standing with you and for you, not onely suffering the same afflictions in bodie and soule, that you do

x. Rom. 8. 31.

and

and so learning by themselues to remember youin bonds, as those that are bound with you, but with all holie comfort, as in respect of your selfe, and with all earnest prayer, as in regard of the Lord, ayding you to their vttermost: yea because he, that z is free from shaddowe of tyranny, hath bestowed so many excellent graces of his his vpō you, as sound knowledge, stedfast faith, vnfained loue, christian patience, and a notable measure of holie obedience to his blessed trueth, although that in some of these, many go before you yet, in al of them I hardly know any of my godly acquaintance in Christ, that goeth beyond you. And yet farther you may the more certainely perswade your selfe of the trueth of this point, because you haue cast him so dear a peece, euen the hart blood of his best beloued sonne, whom he hath giuen, as for the testification of his singular loue towardes man, so to this end also, a that euerie one that beleeth in him shall not perish but haue eternal life. And if that which men buy dear, they esteem, pre-

z Iames.1.17 Gracs from God bestowed on his elect.

a Iohn.3.16

precious, and cannot abide at any hand to haue it perish, surely God will not see that lost, that hee loueth so tenderlie, and which he hath redeemed to him selfe with so great and high a ransome, b 1.Pet.1.18
yea with such and excellent an most precious iewell. To all which if you will add the manifold victories that I ere to fore he hath giuen you, against sinne and Satan, and all their cruell and craftie assaultes, he euen then (as it were) most miraculously deliuering you, when neyther you nor any for you, could so much as once dreame of a way (much lesse beholde it) how you might scape, certainlie you may take it, as the voice of God from heauen, that hee will not now (specially sith hee hath vouchsafed you so many mercifull meanes of a ioyfull deliuerance,) throwe you off or caste you away: but deale rather with you as hee dooth with other his seruantes, c make perfect in you, the good thing that he hath begunne in you, euen vntill the day of Iesus Christ, and cause you d thorow ma- c Philip.1.6 d Act.14.22

nifold tribulations to enter into his owne kingdome, *e* and crowne you there with eternall glorie.

e 1.Cor.9.25. 2.Tim 4.8 Iames.1.12. 1.pet.5.4

And what though you thinke it long, before the Lord come in comfort to you, yet knowe, *f* that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slacknes, but that hee that will come, will come quicklie, and will not tarie. His nature is not *g* alwaies to bee chiding, neither will he keepe his anger for euer, (as the Prophete saith) Ioseph would not continuallie dissemble, his tender affection towards his vnkinde brethren, but must of necessitie *h* breake forth into teares, and weepe vpon Beniamins necke. And shall wee thinke that the Lord is lesse compassionate? If wee doo so, we belie God and dallie with, yea, deceiue our owne soules.

f 2.pet 3.

g psal 103.9

h Gen. 43 30.

I denie not, but he may for a time indeede, hide his louing countenance from vs, and shewe vs after a sorte (as it were) his darke partes, and that the better eyther to proue our patience, in

Exod.33 23.

trying

trying howe wee came for a while forbeare that, which wee exceedingly desire, and (as it were) hunger and thirst after, or else to cause vs the more highlie to esteeme of the same: For this is naturallie in vs, in the continuance of Gods fauours, to make little account thereof.

Howbeit, this wee may assure our selues of that though k vveeping may abide at euening, yet ioy shall come in the morning, l and that his louing kindnesse hee vvill not take from vs for euer, nor falsifie the vvoord, yea the oath that is gone out off hys mouth.

k psal,30,5
l psal,89,28

And mee thinketh that heereof you, not one bye amongest, but aboue many other, shoulde bee throughlie perswaded, as well by the viewe of your owne estate, as by the consideration of his most gracious nature: wee beleeue his mercies, yea, you beleeue them, to bee so greate, yea so infinite that they cannot bee (as a man would say) conteyned within himselfe, but must

of necessitie ere long,(euen as continuall springing fountaines, that will ouerflowe all, and make euerie thinge fruitful and pleasaunt where they come) breake foorth and shewe themselues not onely generallie to all, but in a speciall manner to some, chieflie m to those that are poor, & of contrite spirits trēble at his word, n and mourn in Sion, for to such is it in verie deede that the Lorde vvill looke and haue a speciall regard.

m Esay. 66. 2
n & 61. 3

Amongest the which, sith (if I knowe any) you your selfe may iustlie bee numbred: you can not but beleeue, that you shall haue a plentifull portion, of this ouerflowing fauour, because you see as certaynelye inrolled in that number, as if your name were particularlye put down.

And as for your state, you and wee together knowe it to bee long, tedious, and hard, wherein notwithstanding you ought to comfort your selfe, because you are assured of this, and that not onely by diligent obseruation of naturall

courses, that there is no tempest or stoorme so greate, but there insueth euen in the necke of it, (as a man would say) a verye quiet calme, nor any winter so colde and deadlye, but there commeth both a springing time, and summer also after: neither yet by the examples of some worthie particular persons alone, as Abraham, Job, Dauid, and such like, whose endes and issues you haue heard off, to bee comfortable and (as it were) heauenlie, but by manifolde experiences in your selfe, the Lord making you in your owne hearte to finde that to bee true, which as hee had promised in his woord, so hee faithfullye performmed to his seruauntes in all ages, and hath accomplished to and in you, that o he wil not suffer you to be tempted aboue that you be able, (to wit, to beare thorow him) but will euen giue the issue with the temptation, that ye may be able to beare it. o 1. Cor. 10. 13.

Waite therefore with all christian patience, for the Lordes Spring-time and harueſt, wherein hee will come

himselfe being reconciled vnto in Iesus Christ, and comfortable call you forth, yea take you (as it were) by the hand, & walke with you into the fieldes and say,

p Cant. 2. 11 p Arise my loue, my faire one, & come thy waie, for behold vvinter is past, the rain is chaunged and gone away: the flovvers appeare in the earth, the time of the singing of birdes is come, & the voice of the turtle is heard in our land: meaning vnder these earthlie similitudes and comparisons, all spirituall and heauenlie graces, together with the excellent fruites and effectes that by the same he will worke in you.

Concerning which, as you muste not bee discouraged, eyther with the length of time, in which they are withholde from you, or the hardnesse and sharpnesse, of the instrumentes and meanes, whereby they are brought to passe in you: so must you assure your selfe, that at the length they will come, because hee is faithfull, and willing and able to performe that hath promised, and their delaie doubtlesse wil be recompen-

pected, with all manner of ſpirituall abundance.

For euen as in huſbandrie, the dayly moiſture, harde froſtes and thicke ſnowes that fall in the winter ſeaſon, doo nocrde nothing els, but ſeaſon the ground, mellowing it and making it fitte for the better receiuing and bringing foorth alſo of that, which is committed to it, and ſhall bee ſowen in it, howſoeuer it ſeeme contrarie ſometimes vnto mans iudgement: So no doubt, the raine, the froſtes, the ſnow, and the yſe of your afflictions, are (as it were) not onelie preparatiues, for the grounde of your heart and ſoule, fitting you for, yea filling you with the pleaſaunt fruites of righteouſneſſe and religion, which are (as it were) Gods ſummer and harueſt q fruites and ſo in Chriſt, ſhallbe accounted and accompliſhed in you. q phil. 1.11

Till which time come, aſſure your ſelf of this, that as he r will not leaue you (alwaies or vtterly, no not very long cõfortles, for ſo he hath faithfully promiſed r Ioh. 14. 18.

in his blessed woorde, but when you seeme most in danger and dystresse, will visite you, and replenish you with all heauenlye and holie comfort, that being a moste proper and fitte tyme for hym to woorke in, for the manifestation of his power in the eyes of the wicked, and the declaration of his loue towardes his owne people: so hee will not destitute you of all necessarye strength, both to vndergoe and to ouercome too, whatsoeuer it shal please him as your moste mercifull father, nowe or else at anye time hereafter, to laye vppon you, or to exercise you withall.

As for mee, looke what dute ye it shall please you to prescribe, and God shall vouchsafe in mercie to enable me to performe, I will not (God aiding me) saye therein: yea, I say vnto you, not onely vse me, but commaund me in the same, and if you finde mee not therein readie to my vttermost, I am content you shall write me vp with such dissembling and faithlesse friends,

as

es abound almost euerie where.

Thus I promise, and by his strength, that must performe all in all, I hope I shall accomplish that I will not cease in my poore measure to pray for you, till such time, as I shall vnderstand, that as by manie other meanes, so particularly by that, God himselfe shalbe pleased, to bestowe vpon you your full deliuerance: and I haue occasion to yeeld him humble thankes, for graunting the graces that I & others, as on your behalfe, haue soundly (though in weakenesse and wantes) prayed vnto him for.

And thus with hartie thanks for your manifold and continuall kindnesses towardes me and mine, and humble salutations in Christ, vnto you, and your good bedfellowe mistresse H. I doe vnfeignedly commend you to the Lord Jesus, whose sith you whollie are, and to whome sith your heauenly father, hath giuen you to be kept, I doubt not but you shal continue fast and remaine sure, euen vnto the end, not onely because he to whom you are cõmitted for custodie, s hath

s Math. 28. 18.

s Math, 28, 18 s hath al powver giuen vnto him, both in heauen and earth, but also because we knowe, in the trueth of his worde

t Iohn 10. 12 that is the trueth it self, t that he looseth none of those, that are committed

u & 6. 37. vnto him, u nor casteth anie such away as come vnto him. At London the last of this May. 1589.

Your worships, as bounden, so readie alwayes in all that he may. T.W. the Lords most vnworthy seruant.

GRACE AND PEACE
from God, &c.

WE haue (right honorable) if my poore iudgement deceiue me not, manifolde proofs of this point that the afflictions of the spirite, are muche more great and grieuous than the diseases or troubles of the outward man. For first the holie Ghost himselfe in plaine tearmes affirmeth it, saying: a The spirite of a man will sustayne his infirmitie, meaning thereby, his outward paines and griefes of what nature or kinde soeuer, but a wounded spirite who can beare? vnderstanding thereby the troubles of the hart or soule, speaking as though he shoulde saie it is not onely a very hard thing to performe, but that verie fewe also are found, that can indeede

The afflictions of the spirite most grieuous.

a Prou. 18. 14.

indure it, yea none but suche, as are indued with some special grace from God himselfe. Secondly, the verie lamentable complaintes and earnest prayers, that Gods Children (who indeede are moste, I had almost said onely exercised that way, this I am sure of, with fruite and profite) haue especiallie in that distressed case, made and powred forth, doe plainlie proue it. Take Dauid & Paul, in stead of manie, or all if you will: the one auouching that there *b* was nothing sounde in his flesh because of Gods anger, neither rest in his bones by reason of his sinne: and the other crying out, *c* Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer me from the bodie of this death? Thirdly the fearefull effectes, that the one bringeth forth more than the other, it taking for the time, appetite from the stomake, sleepe from the eye, hearing from the eare, and all maner of delight, lawfull and vnlawfull, outward and inward from the whole man, as particular examples of Gods saintes doe manifestly shewe (for which see

b Psalm. 38. 3.

c Rom. 7. 24.

By fearefull effectes.

be the places quoted in the margine, and some such like) and experience in our selues (if euer we haue bene in that estate) or the condition of other men (if wee haue heedily obserued it) will sufficiently warrant the same vnto vs.

Psal.77.2.3.4.&c.
Psal.102.3.4 5.6.7.&c.

Neither yet are these thinges propounded, to dismaie and discourage those that are after that sorte exercised, for surely their afflictions and troubles, be hard and heauie inough, and indeede we rather craue all maner of comfort, than anie depressing at all their sinne, and the sight of the same, with the apprehension of Gods iustice and iudgement against them for it, beeing as the Prophet saith in another Psalme (vz.38.4. gone ouer their head, and become as a weightie burthen, to heauie for thē to beare: or to throwe downe aboue measure when they come to it, such as haue not entred into that course or combate. For howsoeuer as yet, they haue not felt weakenesse or wantes in themselues, or Gods strength assisting them agaynst sinne, yet then shall they finde that true

that

that the Apostle sayth, d that God is
d 1.Cor.10.13 faithfull and will not suffer them to bee
tempted aboue that they are able, but
will euen giue the issue with the temp-
tation that they may be able to beare it:
or to stop anie from striuing, to yeeld
to particular persons in that distresse,
anie relieue or comfort that God hath
giuen them themselues, for that were to
cause them to neglect, the best duties of
holie loue towardes men in their mise-
rie, we being enioyned by the Lord, to e
e Galat.6.2 beare one an others burthen, f and to
f Rom.12.15 weepe with them that weepe, and to de-
priue themselues of comfort in the daies
of the like daunger, for howe can they
looke to be pitied, that haue had no care
to extende the same to others.

But rather to comfort them that are
afflicted, and that euen in the greatnesse
g 1.Cor.10.13 of their griefe whilest they see no g o-
ther temptation to haue taken holde of
them, but such as appertaineth to man,
yea to the best men that haue bene in
this life, which also the greater they are,
the more are they therein conformed

vnto

vnto the *h* image of the sonne of God Jesus Christ in his sufferinges: who patiently vnderwent, and mightily ouercame (not one by for himselfe, but for vs) all that that we beare but in part, & yet shal at the last throgow him, be in and of the same *i* more than conquerours: and to prepare others before they come into those conflicts, that so, neither an imagination of their own strēgth neuer as yet assaied, nor a conceit of the weake force of the foe, neuer well felt, nor the vnwontednesse of the troubles that they must indure, nor the greatnesse or length of the trials that they are to sustain, nor any other thing whatsoeuer may cast thē downe, much lesse ouercome them, but prouoke thē rather to be prepared in the strēgth of God, the power of his word, and the might of his spirite, valiantly to encounter with ỹ same *l* lifting vp their heads & harts knowing that the time of their redemption draweth nigh: & to excite and stir vp the affections, in al christian pitie & bowels of compassion, to inlarge themselues to their vttermost, yea beyond,

h Rom, 8.17

i 29

k Ephes, 6. 10 11. &c.

l Luke, 21, 28

it,

it, if they coulde tell howe, towards such afflicted soules, that so according to the
m 2.Cor.1.4. m consolations, which they themselues haue receiued from God, they may minister comfort vnto others distressed, perswading themselues further of this that the more hard the cure and worke is, (speciallie if they feele the same left them, as a spurre to pricke them forward) the more glorie shall thereby rebound vnto God (the n onely worker and giuer of all good thinges) and the more comfort to themselues, whome God hath bin pleased to vse, as worthie
n Phillip.2.13. Iames.1.17. instrumentes, & that not in some meane affaire or busines, but in this great dutie of comforting the distressed, o and saiuing them with feare, pulling them out
o Iud.23. of the fire.

Nowe as by that which hath bin alreadie deliuered, wee may sensibly see a difference betweene bodily afflictions, and the inward sorrowes of a troubled spirite: so it is not to be doubted, but that such amõgst those inward griefs, temptations and assaultes, that such

indure

woure, some are more sharpe, and sore than other some, though indeede the least and shortest of them, be verie grievous to flesh and bloud (or to speake as the Apostle doth *p* no chastisement for the present seemeth to bee ioyous, but grievous rather) I will not say to bear, for I suppose verily everie man will confesse it, but even to thinke of: which were the point doubtfull wee might labour to prove but being a manifest and confessed trueth, it shall not be amisse to spare that paines, and to travaile in that, which is somewhat more hard, and may be of much better use.

p Hebr. 12.

Amongest those troubles of the inward man that are greatest indeede, none in my simple iudgement, fitteth more nigh to, or pincheth or presseth more hard the hearts of the deare Saints and servauntes of God, in the dayes of their flesh and combating, than the sight or memorie of the fearefull sinnes that they have committed against hys blessed majestie: which also as they aggravate into themselves, not onely in

their owne nature, that is to say, as they are sinnes, and violations or breaches of the law of God, but in the circumstances of time, place, persons, and maner of doing, as that they were committed in the daies of knowledge, publikely, and by men of great note & name &c. all which doth adde vnto iniquitie, & causeth the same to be more grieuous, & they increase it vnto themselues, as in regard of ꝑ bitter effects they bring forth, as separation betweene God and man, a taint and curse vpō the creatures, hoorp of heart in our selues, infirmities vpon the flesh, temporall & eternall death both of bodie and soule, without great grace & singular fauor from almighty god, &c. in all which respects, the weake heart had neede to be g stayed, least it faint and fall downe without hope of rysing vp, and the wounded spirite calleth indeede, for some of the wine and oyle of God to be powred thereinto, least otherwise it fester and become irrecouerable.

g Can. 2. 5
1. Thess. 5. 14

But against al and euery one of these (though sore, assaultes I confesse) we shal

shall see that we haue singular and speciall consolations, and that not fewe in number alone, and these weake and feeble also, but mauie and the same verie mightie, yea euerie one of them strong and sufficient it selfe, to beate backe this assault, though it were muche more powerfull and forcible, then it is, that so being compassed about, and as it were backed with such a r cloud of witnesses, our hartes might be the more stedfastly vp held not onely in present comfort, but in hope of all good thinges to come.

r Heb. 12.1

I say therefore, that whether we respect the father himselfe, who otherwise s dwelling in light, that no man can come vnto, hath yet notwithstanding plentifullie and plainely reuealed himselfe vnto vs in his word: or by the eye of a stedfast faith looke vppon Iesus Christ his son and our sauior, who is also the brightnesse of the glory and the t ingrauen forme of his person: or regard the blessed word of almightie God, in all the parts and peeces of it, but specially in the promises thereof propounded

s 1. Tim. 6. 16

t Hebrew. 13.

The Sacra-
mente.
1 Cor. 10. 1. 2.
3. &c.
Rom. 4. 11.

Discipline of
the Church.

for our cõfort: or consider as we should and are bound, the holy sacraments that he hath giuen vs in this world, as pledges of his goodnes toward vs, & seales of the faithe, that hee hath wrought in vs, or might well as wee ought, that right order of discipline & gouernment, that he hath established in his Churche, for the repressing of euill, or maintenance of all well dooing: or diligently marke the singular fauors that hee hath plentifullie shedde out vpon those, that haue gone before vs in the flesh, and in the faith: or see and feele the great graces, that hee of his owne good will hath bestowed vppon vs our selues poore and miserable wretches that wee are: or behold with a sound iudgement sin it selfe, specially, as in regard of the good, that God maketh to flowe from it (howsoeuer it be odious and vglie in it selfe) we shall certainely finde, that from all and euerie one of these, wee may without doubt gather strong argumentes and forcible reasons, assured and continuall comfort, for the forgiuenesse of all our

sins,

sins, & by consequent also for the sound and Christian peace of our own hearts.

Nowe to the ende, that that which hath bene generallie spoken, and shortly deliuered may yet appeare to bee as true and certaine, so plentifull and large, let vs come more particularly, and at length (as it were) yet without tediousnesse, to deduct and laie out these poynts.

For the first we haue the verie mercifull nature, and readie inclination of almighty God in himselfe to shew pitie and compassion, to those that are humbled, who howsoeuer he declare himself in word and deede armed, and that with iustice against the proud Pharisee, or benummed and senselesse professor, as he hath good cause indeede, for their continuance in sinne, and want of a trembling spirite, standeth yet notwithstanding, in his fatherly compassion and loue, most graciously affected, to such as quake and stoupe before him. Which that we might be the better perswaded of, he hath bene pleased plainly to tel vs,

Of the nature of God himselfe.

and that in his holie worde also that hee
u Ezech.18,23 hath no desire that u the wicked shoulde
die, but rather that hee should liue: and
x Exod.34.6,7 againe, that hee is the x Lord, strong,
mercifull and gracious, slowe to anger,
and aboundant to goodnesse and trueth,
reseruing mercie for thousandes, forgi-
uing iniquities and transgressions, &c.
y Isaiah,61.3 and that he will giue to such as y mourne
in Sion, beawtie for ashes, and the oyle
of ioy for mourning, and the garment
of gladnesse, for the spirit of heauinesse,
z Ezek 9,4, &c. or as it is in the prophet Ezechiell z a
marke, by which they shalbe known and
freed from the common calamitie and
destruction of the wicked.

Of the trueth of all which wee may
bee the better assured, because it is the
worde, not of a mortall man, who will
in the hypocrisie and corruption of his
heart doubt and dissemble, but of the
eternall God, (who as he is not deceiu-
ed so doth hee not deceiue, and who
being of an vnchaungeable nature re-
maineth fast and sure) and the same
with a cleare voyce, and in wordes of
much

muche euidencie published and proclaymed, not once and awaie (for then perhaps in the distrustfulnesse of our owne heartes wee might quickly call it into question) a but sundrie times, and in manie places of his holy word.

a Psal 86,5,15 Psal.103 8.9

Secondly, who seeth not, that euen in Iesus Christ, wee haue a mercifull measure of spirituall comfort, prest downe and running euer against this sharpe temptation and sore assault: and that not onely, because as he is God, he is b able to forgiue sinnes, and as man being c made like vnto his brethren, hee is pitifull and readie for that and all other good workes, but also because in him dwelleth, d al the fulnesse of ỹ godhead bodily, we hauing in him redemption thorowe his bloud, that as the forgiuenesse of sinnes, in whome likewise f all the promises of God, are yea and amen, hee himselfe being made of God vnto vs g wisdom, & righteousnesse, and sanctification & redemption: who alone was h wounded for our transgressions, & broke for our iniquitie, bearing ỹ chastise-

The sonne of God and mediator.

b Math.9.5

c Heb.2,17

d Colloss.2,9

e Colloss.1,14

f 2,Cor,1,20

g 1,Cor,1,30

h Isaiah,53,5

ment of our peace, & healing vs thorowe
his stripes he himselfe and nowe other
& 63.3 i treading the wine pvelle of gods wrath
agaynst vs for our sinnes: whome sith
God hath bene pleased to k giue vnto
k Rom.8.32. death for vs all: howe shall he not toge-
ther with him giue vs all thinges also:
If all things, why not then the free par-
don, and full forgiuenelle of all our sins:
Shal you imagine that God wil say al,
& giue vs but some: that were to make
Rom.3.4 him a lier, who is not / onely true, but
truth it selfe. Or shall we deeme that for
the testification of the largenelle of hys
liberality, he wil vouchsafe vs some pety
fauours, and withhold graces of muche
greater excellencie: that were to make
god deale worse with his dear children,
then earthlie princes do, with their du-
tifull seruants. I say therfore againe if
all things, why not remission of sinnes,
speciallie sith in him are hidde (yet so
as they daylie are plainelie, and in good
time shall bee plentifullie displaied, and
abowndantlie, yea perfectlie communi-
m Colloss.2.3 cated vnto his people) m all the trea-
sures

sures of wisedome, knowledge, mercy, and whatsoeuer els is excellent in God, as in respect of himselfe, or comfortable and profitable, as in regard of vs.

Thirdlie, the blessed booke of God itselfe, doeth in the holie commandementes of it call vs, and in the comfortable promises thereunto adioyned, and conteyned therein allowe vs, that notwithstanding the haynousnesse and heavinesse of our sinnes, yea the rather for that (because without the sense of it, neither can we well perceiue our owne estate and miserie, nor effectually feele the excellencie and riches of Gods mercie and fauour) to n draw nigh vnto God that so he may draw nigh vnto vs, who neuer thrusteth them backe, much lesse mweth them aware that come vnto him. n Iame. 4.

In the olde testament none seemeth vnto me more plaine and pregnant, then these y are in the book of y prophet Isay, y holie ghost ther saying: o Come now and let vs reason together saith the lord: though your sinnes were as crymosin, o Isay. 1. 18

they

they shal be made white as snow: though they were redde as Scarlet, they shall be as wooll. And in an other place pbiddeth euery one that is thirstie, come ye to the waters: and ye that haue no siluer, come buy & eat: Come I say, buy wine and milke without siluer, and without money.

p Isay.55.1.

In the new Test.

And in the new Testament, these of our sauiour Christ which is the eternall wisedome of the eternall father are most comfortable and sweet sayings, q Aske, and it shall be geuen you, seeke, and ye shall find, knocke and it shall bee opened vnto you: and againe r: Come vnto me all ye that are wearie and heauie laden, and I will ease you: Take my yoake on you, &c. and you shal find rest vnto your soules, for my yoke is easie, & my burthen light. What can be more lightfull or delightfull? By this commandement we knowe, that our comming to him, shall bee accepted of him, for hee commaundeth not the dooing of that which he abhorreth: And by the promises wee are incouraged, yea assured to receiue, be

q Math.7.7

r Math.11.28.

cause

cause s no one iot or tytle of his woord, much lesse his faithful promises shal fall to the ground, & it is yet more and more cõfirmed vnto vs, in the person of of him that speaketh it, I meane Iesus Christ, who being t in the bosome of the father, hath fully reuealed him & al his wil vnto vs.

s Mat. 5. 18

t Iohn. 1. 18

As for the sacraments, the very cause & end of their institution, doth propound comfort vnto vs in this point, they being ordained by God, & appointed to be administred in his Church, not only to put vs in mind of him and his graces, but to be as helpes & aides to guide our weak faith to Christ himself e, yea to make vs partakers of him, & all his merites, specially the forgiuenes of our sins. In whõ sith there is not onely of himselfe all fulnesse, but that that also is true, which is els where spoken in the Scripture of him, that of his fulnesse wee haue all receiued, and grace for grace, that is, grace vpon grace, or graces heaped one vppon another, or (as a man woulde saie) all aboundance of all manner of

The Sacraments & the end why they were ordayned.

v Iohn. 1. 16

of grace, we may assure our selues, that with him and in him, we shall finde thys grace of the forgiuenesse of sinnes, and eternall life also, because as there is no other sacrifice, for remission of sinnes, but he alone as the Apostle plainelie proueth in the epistle to the Hebrues, so ther is no other x name geuen vnder heauen whereon men must bee saued, but the name of Jesus.

x Act 4.12.

That which is spoken indefinitlie of both the sacraments together, shal better appeare in the particular consideration of them by thẽselues, and a part.

Baptisme.

Concerning baptisme, Gods spirit in many places affirmeth, that it y sauech vs (which yet least any shold ty to the deed done, it adioineth with it faith, the z renuing that is wrought in vs by the holy ghost, & termeth it, a not a putting away of the filth of the flesh, but a confident demanding, ỳ a good cõscience maketh to god) which yet it could not do without forgiuenes of sins before going, for flesh & blood cannot inherit eternal life: but to what end we vrge this saith Peter Acts 2

e Mark. 16.16.

z Titus 3.5

a 1. Peter 3.21

b 1. Cor. 15.50

saith

saith, be baptised euerie one of you in the name of Iesus Christ, for the remission of sinnes.

And that which the seruant sayth (yet by the spirite of God) touching Baptisme, that the maister himselfe (*d* who hath not the spirite by measure) auoucheth in plaine tearmes touching the supper, saying: *e* this is my bloud of the newe testament, that is shed for many, for the remission of sinnes.

d Iohn. 4. 34
The Supper.
e Matth. 26. 28

And that the holie Discipline of the Church it selfe, should afford vs much comfort against this temptation, who is it that either can, will, or dare deme, that will either consider the author of it, euen God himselfe in Iesus Christ, *f* most inclinable to mercy and of great goodnes: or the endes whereunto it was ordayned, it being appointed not onely for the preuention of euill, in the seuerall members and whole bodie, but for the *h* gaining of men vnto God, euen after sinne and transgression, hath entred or preuailed, they being *i* chastised a little in this life, that their soules might bee

Discipline of the Church.
f Psal. 56. 5. 15
g 2. Thes. 3. 14
h 1. Tim. 5. 20
i 1. Cor. 5. 5

saued

kued in the daie of Christ: or the persons exercising or executing the same, that is the Church, and such woorthie men therein as the Church from among themselues, for their rare excellent graces be lodged vpon them from God, haue chosen vnto themselues, who hauing not onelie the promise of the presence of god, that is, that k wheresoeuer two or three are gathered together in his name, hee is in the middest of them, but also the assistance and direction thereof, for where the spirite is, there is power also, ready to receiue & admit vpon repentance, euen as the Lord himselfe: whereof that we our selues might be the better assured, the holy ghost hath bin pleased to cõmit vnto their handes, and to giue vnto them power also / to absolue, & to loose such as are bruised in spirite, and touched with a godlie sorrow for their sin: yea for the further strengthening of our weake faith therein, hee hath not onelie graunted them and vs together with them, his most certaine promise, m that whatsoeuer they loose on earth shall be loosed

k Mark. 18. 20

I Iohn. 20. 23

m Mat. 18. 18

loued in heauen, hee meaning thereby a most sufficient and full confirmation thereof, ratifieng it as verelie to our spirites, euen as though we had heard hys owne voyce speaking vnto vs out of the cloudes, but also hath left vs some example of it in the Woord, and that not of one man committing some smal transgression, or petie sinor offence (as wee say) but such n iniquitie as is not heard of, no not among the Gentiles, that one shoulde haue his Fathers wyfe: Concerning which facte, and reconciliation vppon repentaunce for the same, the Apostle saieth elswhere, o It is sufficient for the same man, that hee was rebuked of manie: so that nowe contrariwise you ought rather to forgiue him, and to comfort him, leaste the same shoulde be swallowed vppe with ouer much heauinesse, wherefore I praye you that you would confirme your loue towardes him.

n 1. Cor. 5.1

o 2. Cor. 6. 7.

In the holie Scriptures or woorde of God, we haue infinit store of examples, and

Examples of Gods mercie.

and bee compassed about on euerie side, (as it were) p with a thick cloude of witnesses, which both for their multitude, and for their faithfulnesse, are greater then al expectation, and to whom for themselues, and in whom for others, God hath bene pleased plentifullie to declare as the riches of his mercie generallie, so particularly, that he q hath kept faith and trueth with them, and will doe so for euer with al those that succeed them in faith and a r good conscience, that so our hope and harte might relie vppon him alone, with whom is no variablenesse, neither shall neuer turne. Let two verie woorthy and plaine (one whereof is in the olde, and the other in the newe Testament) serue for all: s Dauid from an vnfeigned heart acknowledgeth it, and that more then once, that the Lord in the multitude of his mercies, forgaue both the punishment of his sinne, and all his iniquitie whatsoeuer. And Paule with a franke and free mouth openlie confesseth, and that others might heare it and beleeue it, saith: t This is a

p Heb.12.1

q Deut.7.9
2 Chron. 6.5

r 1 Tim.1.7

s Psal.32.5
Psal.103.3

t 1. Timoth.1.15

sayth-

faithfull saying, and worthy by all meanes to be receiued, that Iesus Christ came into the world to saue sinners, of whom I am chiefe.

And if wee respect their persons, they were men notwithstanding their sinnes, dearelie beloued of God: the one taken t by the Lord from the sheepfold, and following the ewes with yong, to feed his people in Iacob, & the other pulled from persecuting the church, to preach & to carry the Lords name among the gentiles.

If we consider the sins that they speak of, we shall find them no lesse x than adulterie, murther, y pride, z blasphemy, persecutiõ, oppression, & sundry such like. If we regard the soundnes & sinceritie of their hearts, they speaking & delivering that, as without a mind doubt lesse to deceive others, so without partialitie and respect as in regard of themselues, and euen as they felt Gods fauour for themselues, & for others, we can not choose but beleeue it, & that we haue our part & portion in it, & the rather because God hath geuen vs these and such

t Psal. 8.70.

u Act. 9.15

x 2. Sam. 1
y 2. Sam. 24.
z 1. Tim. 1. 13.

like holy examples to be (as it were) seals set vnto the promises, for the more strong establishing of the same in our hearts, we perswading our selues, that as we may and ought to profit by the presidents of gods a iudgement, to work in vs vnfeigned feare & reuerence of his maiesty, and care of a better course, thē euer we haue practised: so we shal make vse of exāples of his mercy, to stir vs vp, & to make in vs a holy feeling of all spirituall cōfort & heauenly ioy. And that the graces of Gods holy spirite, which hee himselfe in Christ hath bin pleased plentifully to bestow vpon vs, & more particularly, that ouer precious & holy faith, together with the seuerall fruits & effects that flow frō the same, should pledge vnto vs this great fauour of God in the forgiuenes of our sins, through the death & obedience of his sonne, it is as cleare as the sunne in his glorie and brightnesse: and that not onlie because, if that which is from sinne, and from our selues, may with the discourage vs and beat vs downe, then that which proceedeth from God who is

a 1. Cor. 10. 11

b Rom. 15. 4

The graces of Gods spirit.

c Iude. 20.

grea-

d greater then all, and e onely good, can not choose, but being lively felt and sensible perceiued, but raise vs vp againe, also because the scripture it self, in termes that will admit no darke or doubtfull interpretation auoucheth that God f accepteth vs according to that wee haue, and not according to that wee haue not. f 2. Cor. 8. 12

For sayth, wee haue amongst others that comfortable promise of holie writ. O. Fayth.
g The iust shall liue by faith, which cannot be vnderstood of life here, as well because it speaketh of ỳ time to come, as also because as in respect of breath and being in this world, the wicked haue it as well as the godly, and we know that it was the Lords purpose by his spirit, in that speach to discerne betweene h the pretious and the vile. g Habak. 2. 4 Rom. 1. 17 h Ezech. 22. 26

If we well consider, either the loue that God hath wrought in our hearts towards his saintes, or the vnfaygned mind, that thorow his great goodnes we find in our selues, to forget and forgeue other mens trespasses, wee shall finde Vnfained loue

that to the one & the other may giue vs firme hope, & assured comfort of the forgiuenes of our own sins: the holy ghost affirming of the former, that by this we
i 1.Iohn.3.14 i know wee are translated from death vnto life, because we loue the brethren: for the other, our sauiour himselfe, not only teaching vs to say, k forgiue vs our
k Math.6.12 trespasses as we forgiue them that trespas against vs but also declaring in plain tearmes, that except wee forgiue from our hearts each one to his brother his
l Math.18.35 trespasses, ther is no forgiuenes of ours before God, declaring withal, that wher that is, the other cannot bee wanting, because God is not oncly much more readye, but infinitely much more able, to shewe sinners that notable fauour then men are to manifest it one to another.

Of meanes. Wherein it shall not bee amisse for vs to marke this further, that howsoeuer all the good things we are enabled to do, cannot as they come frō vs nor yet of thēselues in that respect merite Gods
m Esay 64.6 mercie, because m all our righteousnesses are

are as filthie and stained cloutes before him, & n when we haue done al that we can, wee are yet vnprofitable seruants) much lesse any one of the seperated from the rest, the weakenes whereof arising, not from the good things themselues in their owne nature, & as they come from God, (for so they are and must be verie strong, & exceeding good) but by reason of our corruption, & the imperfection y thorow the same cleaueth therto, yet all of them together, and euery one of themselues may bee effectual pledges vnto vs, as of Gods great fauor shed abroad into our harts, so of y crowning of those his graces in vs with wonderful honour, and glorious immortality at the last.

n Luke. 17. 10

Lastlie it seemeth vnto me, that euen from sinne it selfe, though not in it owne nature, for so it is abhominable in the Lords sight, o whose pure eies cannot see euill, neither yet in the effects that commonly it bringeth foorth, for so is it alwaies bytter, making a fearefull p seperation betweene the Lord and vs, & hauing for the q wages of it, eternal death

Of sin it self.

o Habak. 1. 13

p Isaiah. 59. 2

q Rom. 6. 23

and damnation, yet euen in the heynouſ-
nes and heyght thereof, being accompa-
nied with gods fauour in the forgiuenes
of the ſame, we ſhould & may reap an in-
uincible argument, of much conſolation
and ſingular comfort.

For wherein ſhal or can the mercy of
God in this life, ſo much appear towards
his people, as in pardoning the ſinnes of
his ſeruants? To whom had they not
offended neither could gods mercie that
r 1.Tim.3.16. way foorth, haue bin declared, nor Chriſt
s Math.9.13. for thē haue bin r God manifeſted in the
t 1.Ioh.3.5.8 fleſh, who therefore came into the world,
not to call s the righteous, but ſinners to
repentaunce, and did therefore appeare
amongeſt men, not onely that he might t
looſe the works of the deuil, but alſo that
he might take away our ſins.

Outward tokens of Gods fauour. All the outward fauours that wee
haue in this life, if we ſhould reckon thē
vp, one by one, as for example creation,
preſeruation, health, wealth, &c. or bun-
dle them all in a bundle together, cannot ſo
ſenſibly ſet before vs Gods loue, be-
cauſe ſome of them are in ſome ſort com-

mon

mō to other creatures with men, & reach but to the bodie for the most part, & this time present onely, the wicked many times beeing before Gods saintes in some of the same, God also filling their bellies with his hid treasure, their children having inough, and leaving inough of their substance for their children.

v Ps. 17. 14

Spiritual graces.

Nay, I will say more, many of those spirituall graces that God vouchsafeth vnto his Church, as his worde, sacraments & prayer, of which the holy ghost saith, he x sheweth his word vnto Jacob, his statutes and his iudgments vnto Israell, and he hath not dealt so with euerie nation, doe not so plainly expresse the fauour and loue of the Lorde towardes hys people, as the free pardon and full forgiuenesse of their transgressions: the reason is, because y many are called, and fewe are chosen, and diuers bee in the Church, that bee not of the Church: This grace also extending it self, not onelye to bodye and soule in this life, carrying with it comfort and the peace of a

x Psal. 147. 19

y Math. 22. 14

good conscience here, but reaching euen vnto the life that is to come, eternal saluation and life euerlasting, being an inseperable companion, to the forgiuenesse of our sinnes.

And that we might the better be perswaded that this is a verie speciall fauour, God himselfe taketh vpon himself as a principall point of his glory, this great worke of forgiuing, saying a I, euen I am he that putteth away thine iniquities for my owne sake, and will not remember thy sinnes. And in an other Prophet rehearsing the graces, that he will vouchsafe vnto his people in the newe Testament, he reckoneth vp this as the last and chiefest, a I wil forgiue their iniquitie, and remember their sinne no more, that being true here, that the Apostle saieth, that where sinne abounded there grace abounded much more.

a Isaiah. 42. 25

a Iere. 31. 34.
b Rom. 5. 20

To conclude then (good Madam) out of all that is gone before. Seing in this point of the forgiuenes of sins God who is greater than all is *b* on our side, & therefore

The conclusion.

b Rom. 8. 3

therefore wee neede not care who be a-
gaynst vs: Iesus Christ standeth for vs,
who is *c* his dearely beloued sonne, in *c* Math,3,17
whome onely hee is well pleased, and
thorow whome he hath *d* reconciled the *d* 2, Cor,5,19
world vnto himselfe: the word generally
& particularly the promises in the same,
which are in Iesus Christ *e* yea and a-
men speake comfortable things vnto vs: *e* 2,Cor,1,20
the holy sacramentes ordeined by God
for the strengthning of our weake faith,
seale vp that great and gracious fauor
vnto vs: the discipline and voyce of the
Church, which is the *f* piller & ground *f* 1,Tim,3,16
of trueth, and (as it were) Gods owne
voyce from heauen, confirmeth it: the
particular examples of his saintes, ha-
uing in former time found it and felt it
true, doe ratifie and confirme the same:
the peculiar fauors that God hath giuen
vs our selues in this life, and namely
faith *g* (which all men haue not) with *g* 2. Thess,3,2
the sound fruites thereof, doe pledge it
vp: and that god that maketh the *h* rage *h* Psal,76,10
of men to turne to his praise, and in the
beginning commaunded *i* the light to *i* 2,Cor.4,6,
shine

shine out of darkenesse, now maketh sin to serue, for the magnifying and manifesting of his mercie, and the comfort and good of his children who is it that can distrust: or rather who hath not iust cause, with the Apostles and saintes of God, to sing and say, k death is swallowed vp into victorie, O deathe where is thy sting: O graue where is thy victorie: The sting of death is sinne, and the strength of sinne is the lawe. But thanks be to God, which hath giuen vs victorie, through our Lord Iesus Christ. And againe: I am perswaded that neyther death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor powers nor thinges present, nor thinges to come, nor height, nor depth, nor ane other creature shalbe able to separate vs frō the loue of God, which is in Christ Iesus our Lord.

k 1.Cor.15.54. 55.56.57

1 Rom.8.38, 39.

Thus (good Madame) I haue (as your honour seeth) plainely deliuered my poore iudgement, in this worthie point, touching the comfortable feeling of the forgiuenesse of sinnes, and some such assured seales and pledges of the same,

same, as by m dayly reading of the holie scriptures, and continuall meditation in the same, (holie duties that I and all other christians, of what qualitie or calling so euer, are bound vnto by Gods word to performe: and woulde to God all did it, as may knowe and confesse it) the Lorde in much fauor, I freely confesse it, hath bene pleased in the dayes of my distresse, to manifest to me, miserable man that I am, and that not onely for instruction and comfort vnto my self alone (for God neuer bestoweth anie grace vpon vs, much lesse such excellent fauors, to that ende onely) but for the good and consolation of others, who being, n the father of mercies and God of all comfort, doth not onely comfort vs in all our tribulations, but also inableth vs to comfort them, which are in anie affliction, by the comfort wherewith we our selues are comforted of him, what it is I will not affirme, because the holie Ghost hath taught mee saying: o let an other man praise thee, and not thyne owne mouthe, a straunger

m Deut. 17. 18, 19. Iosh. 1. 8 Psalm. 1. 2. Iohn. 5, 39.

n 2. Cor. 1, 3 4.

o Prouer. 27. 2

and

and not thine owne lips, yet sure I am of this that Gods trueth it is, and vpon the certaine perswasion that I haue thereof, I shalbe readie (the Lord assisting me) not onely to confesse it wholie and in all places, and before all persons, but Christ Iesus guiding me, and assisting me *p* without whom I cannot do any thing to lay downe my selfe, and to seale (as it were) with my bloud the certaintie of the same.

p Iohn.15.5

What effect it may bring forth in your honor (at whose religious request I was vnfeignedly forward and willing to vndertake these trauailes, which also I haue accomplished in the simple measure and maner that you see, for the testification of my christian affection) or what it may worke in the afflicted party (for whose good I doubt not, it was, and is of vs both, in all sinceritie and soundnesse performed, *q* euen as in the sight of God) I knowe not.

q 2.Cor.2.17.

This I am sure of, wee be vsed as Gods instruments to *r* plant and to water, but it is he alone, *s* who working in vs

r Philip.2.12.
s 1,Cor.3.6.

vs both the will and the deed according to his good pleasure, must also of his singular fauor graunt the increase, t and with the temptation giue the issue also, that wee may be able to beare and ouercome, which I beseeche him heartily, euen for Iesus Christes sake, to vouchsafe, as generallie to all his saintes, so particularlie to that his distressed seruant, that as we haue learned u to weep with him in his affliction, so in the effectuall feeling of the communion of saints, we may learne to reioyce with him in his spirituall ioy.

t 1. Cor. 10. 13

u Rom. 12. 15

Your Hon. much bounden, and readie alwaies in Iesus Christ. Tho. Wilcockes, the Lordes moste vnworthe seruant.

GRACE AND PEACE from God, &c.

SO I cannot but reioyce (good sir) in your godly loue, and holie care, loue towardes me, that it will please you to vse me your poore friend, and one that is and will be readie according to my small abilitie, for anie dutie you shall enioyne me: and care towardes your selfe, in seeking for your selfe in the middest of your troubles and tryalles, some Christian comforte and instruction, both which are plainelie manifested, in those two necessarie questions, that by you in your letter were propounded vnto me: so I am somewhat, I must confesse it, seized with sorowe, partly for that prouding for my publike place, lacke of leysure, will not moue let me, and partlie, for that want of abilitie, to wade into such weighte

Two questions propounded to be answered.

weightie causes sufficiently, will not suffer me to deale therein, as gladly I would in respect of sincere affection towards you, and as religiously I ought, both in regard of the worthinesse of the causes themselues and of the peace of mine owne heart.

Howbeit this somewhat recomforteth me, that as I rest perswaded, you will accept whatsoeuer I shall deliuer, specially such in the same I shoote at your spirituall consolation and good: so I hope that God whose cause it is that I deale in, and whose glorie I would gladly, principallie aime at in the same, will by his blessed spirite so guide me, that I shall propound nothing but the truth, from imbracing whereof though you may be somewhat hindered, because it is deliuered in a simple and meane, both manner and meane, as I my selfe deme not, yet let the glory of the truth it selfe (which needeth no mans colours to adorne and beautifie the same) so farre preuayle with you, (I beseech you) that both for

iudgement

iudgement and feeling, it may finde a blessed entertainement in you.

The first of the difference of the feare of the wicked and the feare of the godly.

Natural feare what it is.

Concerning your first question, about the difference that is betwixt the feare of the wicked, and the feare of the godly, I suppose it shall not be much amisse to knowe this, that feare being a passion of the heart, and arising not so much from touching, (for that properly respecting the body and outward man, rather breedeth paine) as from cogitation and thought, which directly concerning the minde and inward man, doth more lively strike the same according vnto which also, the bodie it selfe (by reason of the sympathie or fellow-feeling, that the one hath with the other) is for the most part affected, cannot of it selfe, and simply considered, be vicious and euill. The reason wherof is verie plaine and euident, because it being of nature simple: the same infused, or put, or powred into vs, by creation from God, who can not be euill vnlesse we would holde that God made some thing euill (which were horrible blaspheme, and quite & cleane

contrary

contrarie to the fulneſſe of goodneſſe, that is in himſelf, and cõmunicated vnto all his workes, but ſpecially vnto man.

If further taking it in it ſelfe, to be no more euill, to haue feare in the heart, than to haue paine in the flesh: nor that paſſion of feare to be no more ſin in the ſoule, than appetite in the ſtomacke, to eate and drinke, or diſpoſition in the bodie to ſleepe &c. and ſuch like naturall affections and paſſions.

Beſides if this and other naturall paſſions, were ſimply and of themſelues faultie, then this would enſue thereupon, that the creatures, ſpeciallie thoſe that we call ſenſitiue (manie of them as effectuallie in their kinde feeling this and other paſſions alſo, as man himſelfe) ſhould of themſelues carrie about in thẽſelues, a lumpe of iniquitie, which indeed cãnot be true, both becauſe as in regard of their creation they were good, the ſcripture affirming it after Gods own view of them (whoſe iudgement cannot be deceiued) that they were exceedingly good, and alſo becauſe if they had ſinne a Gen. 1. 31.

in themselues and of themselues, eyther they must haue a reconciler, to passe betweene God and them, who also partaking of their nature, must in the nature that had sinned satisfie Gods wrath against sinne (but it is too too beastly to say, eyther that our Saviour Christ had their nature, or that hee dyed for brute beastes) or els they must of necessitie, perishe under condemnation for sinne, because the *b* hier of sinne in whomsoeuer, (without a price to satisfie it) is eternall death: and there is no meane we are sure betweene these two.

b Rom. 6. 23.

But which is most notoriously euill, absurd, and erroneous aboue all the rest: Our saviour Jesus Christ himselfe, should by this meanes, be poluted with sinne, not onely because according to the scriptures, we generally know & beleeue that he was *c* very man in euery respect like vnto vs, (sinne only excepted) but also because the Apostle speaking, euen of this particular humane infirmitie in him plainly saith, in the Epistle to the Hebrues, that hee was *d* heard in the

c Heb. 2. 17, & 4. 15.

d & 5. 7.

things

thinges which he feared.

Nowe to saie that he was touched or tainted any maner of way, with anie, though neuer so small spot of sin, what is it els but to gainesay the holy scriptures, which in *d* manie places affirme him, and that most rightly, to be voyd of iniquitie: yea to make him no fit sacrifice for sinne, because he that must redeeme others from iniquities and transgressions must be himselfe shamelesse, otherwise he cannot be a price of reconciliation: and (which toucheth vs also to the quicke, and importeth vs as nigh as life and death) by consequent to deprive our selues of full pardon and forgiuenesse of all our sinnes, because if Christ died not the *e* iust for the vniust, wee remaine vnder transgression, and being alive *f* are dead in trespasses and sinnes, and so vnder eternal death. Here then is required, a right discerning spirite, yea a hart indeede that is indued with a notable portion of heauenly wisdome & spiritual grace frō aboue, yat to ỹ which is not of it selfe euill (though I speake

d Isa.53.9. Ioh.8,46. 1 Pet.2,22.

e 1.Pet.3.18,

f Ephes.2.5.

particularly of the passion of feare, yet it shall not bee amisse to practise it in all of the like nature) may thorowe the great worke of the sanctification of the word and spirite of God, growe euerie daie better and better, with mightie increases from an high.

The sight and knowledge of al which as it cannot but strike muche terror, yea horror into the hearts of the wicked and vngodly, because thorowe the strength and power of their own sinne, they haue made the light that was in them (which in my minde may not vnfitly be resembled to the dawning of the day, and was and is sufficient to make them without excuse or defence before God) to become darkenesse, and by that meanes are plunged into obscuritie as grosse (if not more grosse) as that of Egypt: so should it be very comfortable to those, in whom the Lord himselfe hath bene pleased by his owne hand, and ordinance to aduance that worthie worke of regeneration, and that not onely while they doe not as the wicked, sinne in all ma-

ner

ner of extremitie of naturall passions, adding drunkennesse vnto thirst) and shoꝛow the coꝛruptiõ of nature and Satans deadly and insatiable malice, defacing their own light, and so are become stocks and voyd of all sense of the same: but also while they haue nature it self so inlightned by the trueth of the woꝛd, and reformed by daily addition of grace frõ aboue, that in continuall wrestling and striuing against it, speciallie the coꝛruptions of it, they gaine so much, that they cause euen that as other thinges also to tend to the aduancement of his glorie that is Loꝛd of nature, and hath it at cõmaund, and to their owne comfoꝛt, and the good of others, wherat those sparks and remainders of nature, that are yet in vs vndefaced, doe in some soꝛte aime, how much moꝛe may they attaine vnto it, not onely when they are accompanied, but when they are ayded thereto, with the graces of God in vs.

But to come somewhat moꝛe nigh to the point we are to deale in, and yet it can not be denied, but that that which

hath bene alreadie deliuered, doth properly concerne the same methinketh we may betwene the two feares, which you desire to be satisfied in, obserue a double difference: the one as in respect of the causes, I say causes, neither let ẏ seeme straunge vnto you, that there are & may be many causes of one and the self same thing, from whence it commeth and proceedeth, though some in the same bee more principall working causes, than other, as euerie petie logician wil redily acknowledge) the other as in regard of the effectes and fruites that they bring forth in the seuerall parties and persons diuersly, (according to the diuersitie of the feares thẽselues) affected therewith.

Of the feare of the wicked.

Whence it riseth.

That feare which is in the wicked ariseth, either from some conceite that they haue within them, of shame and disgrace before men, in whose sight, with them themselues, it is a great and grieuous iudgement, and goeth to their heart, as cold as the panges of death, to be clothed with confusion, for being men and no more but naturall men, as they

like

like well of themselues, so they would gladly be highly esteemed of their likes: or els, (being bitten or stoong with the knowledge of some euill, eyther conceiued or performed) from some impression, and sense that they haue, of punishment before god for the same, whose infinite iustice, as they haue moste heynously offended, so they certainly know, that they cannot by anie meanes withstand and auoid, this being ingrauen in their heartes by the light of nature that sinne and his punishment must alwaies goe, (as it were) arme in arme, or els from some other odde imagination, and carnall conceit of their owne (as g mans heart is deceitfull and wicked aboue all thinges, who can knowe it:) and that still in selfe loue towardes themselues onelie, for this neuer mouth them that by their iniquities, they haue pulled wrath and displeasure vpon other men, from almightie GOD: all and euerie one whereof, (no doubt) are muche furthered in them, not onely through abuse of naturall feare, and also by

Groweth.

Continueth.

g Iere. 17. 19.

meanes of their melancholike constitution, or complexion, as we say (a meane that God himselfe hath bene pleased to appoint and vse, euen in his iustice against the wicked, greatly to increase their terrors and feares) but also by the horrible distrustfulnesse of their owne heartes, they finding no matter of true and stedfast ioy in themselues (as who in the stinging testimonie of their owne soules, are conuicted of moste grieuous transgressions, and eternall iudgement for the same, and how is it then possible for them to haue sound peace?) nor seeing anie sure comforte from others, eyther in heauen aboue, or in earth beneath among men, who if they cannot when, and as they would afford themselues consolation, much lesse may those other looke to receiue it at their hands because as in others, so in this respect charitable relieue beginneth with a mans owne selfe: nor beholding any ioyfull fauour, to them selues from God, whose displeasure rather in hym selfe, and hys creatures, they haue

Other causes thereof.

highly

highlie prouoked against them, thorow infinite iniquities, and therefore must looke not onely to haue his backe partes geuen them, but all the vessels and vials of his wrath in time, and in a full measure to bee powred foorth vpon them.

But the feare of the godlie, is in them not onely as a naturall passion (for so that condition they haue common with the wicked of the world, and some of the creatures of God, as hath in part bene prooued alreadie,) but proceedeth also from an vnfaigned loue, and a sincere reuerence of God, his maiestie, and whatsoeuer generallie is in him, & more particularlie his iudgementes, being shead abroade into their heartes, and effectually planted, continued and increased in them, thorow the holy exercises of his word, and powerfull working of hys blessed spirit accompanieng the same, they beeing also stirred vppe thereto, not for worldlye respectes or carnall considerations, as shame before men or outward punishment that they must

Of the feare of the Godly

Where it resteth.

groweth.

Continueth

vndergo

vndergoe for sinne committed, or transitory glorie, which they must forgoe and loose, &c. as the wicked and vngodlie, but vpon holy regardes, euen as well be seemeth Gods saincts and seruauntes, not onelie professing, but sincerelie imbracing godlinesse: namely, for that they haue set God against them selues, not as a iudge sharpe and seuere, but as a most louing & tender father, the remembraunce whereof, euen in that respect as vnto them, as if it were the darts of death and the sensible feeling for the time, of the verie pangues and paines of hell, and the state of the damned, there being litle or no difference betweene the one & the other, but as in regard of length of time, of this life present, and the causes mouing such distresse: m also which they are lead not so much to repent themselues (for many of them in vnfeigned loue to others haue after a sort desired their own destruction) as the glorie of God their most gracious father, the honour of that blessed religion which they professe, and loue of others, that not onely

in

in the flesh, but also in the faith, are deare and precious vnto them, fearing therefore least all or any of these, should vnto them or by them, bee any manner of way, though neuer so smallie, wounded or hurte: hauing alwayes, and that in such a portion as God seeth fit for his glorie, and their good (notwithstanding their manifold wantes and vnworthynesse) that precious gifte of faith; which as it commeth from God alone, and is begun, continued, and encreased in his children, by the ministerie of preaching, participation of the sacramentes, and powerfull working of his owne spirit, so is it peculiar to the elect onelie, to appropriate Gods mercies vnto them selues, for the cõfort of their own soules, and to sanctifie all other things to them, so this naturall feare wherewith them, and to keepe it in so, that it breake not forth, either into sinne against God, or offence before men. And as concerning the effectes or fruites the which they yeeld and bring foorth (which is the second difference betweene them,) wee shall

shall find as great ods, and diuersitie as in the causes, whereof also there is good reason, because such as the cause is, such is the effecte (which who is it almost that knoweth not?) and then the causes being sundrie, the effectes likewise must be so too.

Concerning the feare that is in the wicked, it either maketh them fretfull in themselues, as we may see by that little quietnesse they haue, whether they be at home or abroad, sleeping or waking in sickenesse or in health, their life being nothing els but a sea of continuall troubles, which fire though they seeme for a time to rake vp vnder the ashes of counterfeyt rest and dissembled ease, yet will it at the length breake foorth as a mightie flame to consume them: or els causeth them, to be much disquiet towardes others, they plainely bewraying the same either by some hard woordes, or sharpe deedes, or furious countenances, & that many times, not onely against them whom they cannot abide, but against them also that in manifolde respectes,

The effects of feare in the wicked.

In themselues

Towards others.

shoulde

should be dear vnto them, as their wiues that lie in their bosomes, their children that issue out of their loines, their frends that be as themselues, their seruauntes that haue walked dutifullie towardes them. &c. Or prouoketh them to bee impatient and murmuring euen against God himselfe, not only because his hand for sinne lieth hard & heauy vpon them, but also because they can see or finde no way, howeyther to soften, or to shift, or to auoid the same. For though they seek to run away, & would gladly flie if they could tell how, from the face & presence of his eternal maiesty, (as we may see in our first h parents Adam and Heuah, and in the practise of all ages, and euen of this present time) who bitten (as it were) with the teeth, & wounded with the dart of this deadly feare, do not only faint in themselues, and i smite their knees together, but manifest to men by sorrowful sighes, lamentable complaints, yea and desperate dealings also, sometimes against their own soules & bodies & that without any remorse of heart, or god-

Impacience or murmuring against God.

h Gen. 3. 8

i Dan. 5. 6.

godlie greefe at all, whereof wee haue manyfold examples (both in the holye scriptures & other writers also) knowne I am sure vnto you, so well exercised in the word (as I take and iudge you to be) yet they know there is no way to escape his reuenging hand against them for their sinnes, and k hart that cannot repent, and that is it that increaseth their feare, and augmenteth their woe, and causeth them to enter into these furies both wordes and deeds.

k Rom. 2. 5

The effectes of feare in the godly.

But the feare that is in the godly (being yet notwithstanding mingled, both with hope and ioy, as we may perceaue by the Apostles wordes, who speaking of the faithfull saith, We are afflicted on euerie side yet are we not in distresse, we are in doubt, but yet we despaire not: and by that which is reported in the gospell, of the women which came to Christes sepulchre, of whom the Euangelist Matthew affirmeth, that m they departed with feare & great ioy) maketh them in the daies of their prosperitie (considering in what a tickish estate they

1. Cor. 4. 8

m Matth. 28. 8.

In themselues

In the daies of prosperitie,

they are, and howe easily carried vn^o pride, against men, and forgetfulnesse of God) carefull and watchfull ouer themselues, to walke in a good conscience before God and men, according to the measure of mercies both past and present, that they haue receiued from God: and causeth them in the midst of their distresses (weighing how quickly by the remainders of sinne they may be thrust into impatience) to labour the attaining of a quiet spirite within themselues: beeing assured, that [a] all thinges shall worke together to the best for them that loue and feare God: yea, it prouoketh them to be humble & lowly, yea and that in all sound maner, towards others, before whome, and to who^m they practise that, and that also for good example, incouragement and comfort (I meane humblenes of mind proceeding from a quiet heart) that they haue had from others in such like times performed vnto themselues. Neither staieth it here, but proceedeth further, inabling them according to the grace that they

Time of acquisite.

[a] Rom. 7.28

Towardes others.

they haue receiued from God, o in pati-
ence to possesse their owne soules before
him, in what estate or condition soeuer it
shall please him to place them, wherein
howsoeuer they be sometimes seized
with doubt, not of God verily (whose in-
finit power and good will towards them,
they knowe by the trueth of his woord,
and particular experience that they them
selues haue had, to be incomprehensible
and vnchaungeable) but of themselues
by reason of the weakenesse and want
which they carrie about with thē, which
also by manifold trialsin themselues and
others, they haue learned and not with-
out cause, iustlie to suspect) yet they haue
at the length recourse vnto him, by ear-
nest prayer made in faith, and so at the
last are heard in the thinges that they
prayed for, according to his will in christs
obedience being of his singular mercie
either vtterlie freed from the thinges
that they feared, or els hauing strength,
patience and comfort communicated
vnto them from aboue, to vndergoe
and to ouercome also (but yet by such

o Luk. 21.19
What doubt-
fulnes is in
the godly.

holie

holy meanes as God hath appointed, & at such times as he hath set with himself frō before all tymes) not only that which presently lieth vpon them, but whatsoeuer afterwardes may pynch, or presse downe.

And this much for this present touching this question, wherein I could haue willinglie bene contented, further to haue inlarged my selfe, but that paper and time skanting me, I am constrained to finish, hoping that whatsoeuer is wanting now, may be supplied some other time hereafter, either by word of mouth, or wryting, or both, as God shal be pleased by you to giue occasion, and for you and some others (to whome I wish all good in Iesus Christ) to furnish mee with ability.

In the meane while I hope this shal be wel accepted of you, which whether it be the summe of that, that I deliuered when wee were last together by word of mouth, and you desired mee to put downe in writing, I doo not certaynely know: howbeit, the trueth, I

reſt perſwaded, it is: and though it may differ ſomething from it in form and manner, yet I am reſolued that it is the ſame, in ſubſtaunce and matter: which if perhaps written it affect you not, as when it was ſpoken, lay not the blame thereof vpon your ſelfe (as you are woont to doo) charging yea ſurcharging your ſelfe with dulneſſe of comprehenſion: for doubtles God hath giuen you a great grace, compared with many other of his ſeruaunts to conceiue the trueth: neither accuſe the point it ſelfe with darkneſſe and difficultie, for it is as the reſt of gods trueth is, plaine and euident vnto them that are inlightned in Sion, but impute the fault of it vnto me, who either thorow the ignoraunce of the cauſe in my heart cannot, or by reaſon of negligeance, or thorow the want of a ſtayed minde perhaps haue not ſo plainely vnfolded my ſelfe, nor waded into the cauſe according to the weight therof, as were to be wiſhed.

In the diſcourſe whereof, I haue not

(as

(as you see) quoted many places of scripture, for neither indeede is that my manner, howsoeuer some do too much affect it (vnlesse some vrgent cause, or the earnest request of my good frendes draw me thereto) neyther thinke I that the truth standeth so much vpon the multitude of allegations or wordes of text it selfe, as vpon sound reasons deduced from the same.

But if happilie you are desirous to see sentences of scriptures for these pointes, you may looke vpon the Concordances and tables that bee already published vpon the olde and new Testament, which in the tyme of Feare will affoord you store, whether also for brevities sake, I sende you to peruse them, at your leysure, and at your pleasure, as you shall thinke good.

One or two pointes, and that with places out of the woord, as my memorie would helpe, I could not, for all that is written before let passe, as this first, that feare is not contrarie to faith & hope, which is proued Philip. 2. 12.

Hei pus

Godly feare not contrary to faith.

Hebrues 3.14. 1.Peter.3.17. Secondly that God by his worde, hath appointed men, sundrie good meanes to remoue it, and amongest the rest, these, as minding of Gods former fauours, for which see Deut.7.18.19.20. earnest prayer and calling vppon his name, for which see, Deut. 32.7.9.13. Thirdly that the feare of the faithfull, is so farre from bringing miseries with it, that it hath attending vpon it, as an vnseparable companion, blessednesse from God, for which see, Prouerb.28.14.

Meanes to remoue the griefe of feare.

The second question of the boldnesse of the wicked and the godly.

Touching your second question, concerning the difference that is betwixt the boldnesse of the godly, & that which the wicked seeme to haue, I trust (the premisses considered) I shall not neede to spend labour, or take anie pain therein, because these thinges beeing one of them contrarie to the other, and contrary being opposed (as we saie) doe more plainly appeare, they may be an enterviewe (as it were) and by comparing them one with another, bee easily discerned.

Not.

Notwithstanding, if you shall not thinke this sufficient, doe but signifie so much in a line or two, and you shal (God willing) with conuenient speede, heare from me.

And so hoping that you wil assist me, with your hearty prayers vnto the almightie, not onely for a sanctified vse of such fauours as I haue receiued, but for a blessed continuance and mightie increase of the same, for the glory of him that giueth them, for the peace of myne owne heart, for the profite of his people, and amongest them for your good: I take my leaue hastily. At Croingdon, the 24. of this December. 1588.

Yours assured and readie alwaies in Iesus Christ, Thomas VVilcocks, the Lordes vnworthie seruant.

I beseech thee (good reader) pardó these scapes committed, & amend with thy pen, these faults following, or whatsoeuer thou, according to the iudgment and light that thou hast receiued, shalt find amisse herein.

Pag. 1. line 17. for explicat, read communicate. pag. 4. line, 25. for world, read word. Pag. 8. line 10. I, read he. pag. 13, line, 10. for irrepugnable, read impregnable. pag. 19. lin. 3. meanes, read mercies. pag. 36. line 19. comforts, read comforters. pag. 48. line 8. repent, read repenteth. pag. 49 line 19. after works, adde, and. pag. 50. line 5. after it, add might, and line 14. for euamate, euacuat. Pag. 51. line 1[illegible]. for make Iesus, read maketh this. pag. 54. line 4. for our, read one. pag. 55. line 26. put out alwaies. pag. 61. line 10. for him, read them. pag. 62 line 4. put out as, and line 8. for for, read see. pag. 63. line 22 after therefore, adde neede pag. 64. line 8. for tyrannie, read turning. 19. for cast, read cost. and line 20. for peece, read price. pag. 66. line 13. would, read could. pag. 67. line 6. naturally, read naturall. pag. 68. line 8 after spirite, adde, and. pag 70. line 1. after vnto, adde you. pag. 74. line 9. for 1583. read 1579. pag. 89. line 6. for might, read weigh. pag. 96. line [illegible]. for expectation, read exception, line 15. for neither shall neuer turn, nor shaddowe by turning. pag 98. line 10, for make, read work. pa. 100. lin. 1. for to, read both. pag 108. line 9, for folie, read life.

April 14. 1783.